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Williams, Y. R.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ISRAEL IN
THE EIGHTH CENTURY B. C.

by

Kenneth Raynor Williams

(A.B., Morehouse College, 1933)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1936

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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THESIS

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ISRAEL IN

THE MIDDLE EASTERN AREA

BY

LEONARD R. HARRIS

(A.B., Bryn Mawr College, 1955)

MAJOR

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MAJOR

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A. Scope of the study.

Since the economic situation in Israel during the eighth century B. C., was not the result of a sudden outbreak of new activities, but rather the consequence of centuries of slow development it will be necessary first to describe similar activities in the important centuries preceding this period which form the basis of Hebrew life even as we know it today.

B. The sources and the method of procedure.

This study deals with a field in which little work has previously been done. Few of the secondary sources are directly pertinent. Therefore it has been necessary to rely chiefly on the primary sources. The following historical books of the Old Testament have been very helpful:

3. Commerce and exchange. 21

4. Taxation. 27

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Aims of the present study.

This thesis is a study of the economic conditions in Israel during one of the most important periods of early history. Its primary aim is to trace the development of economic activities in Israel and to show how these influenced other phases of Hebrew life and history.

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Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, I Kings, II Kings, I and II Samuel. Other valuable information has been found in the writings of the prophets of the eighth century: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. Additional light has been found in the scattered writings of a few late scholars.

Since archaeologists have not succeeded, as yet, in uncovering data which will enable us to understand completely every phrase of the life of this age, no claim is made of full mastery of this field. But an attempt has been made to become familiar with those factors which bear most directly on the life of any people of any time.

¹ Gen. 12:10; Ex. 12:40-41.
² Gen. 15:13.

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CHAPTER II

THE DAWN OF ECONOMIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN ISRAEL

A. The period of Egyptian bondage.

We first come into contact with the Hebrew nation during the period of its sojourn in Egypt, and it is here we meet a simple people, showing few signs of developing into the nation that has since then played such a vital part in the history of the world. The Bible story of the entrance of the Hebrews into Canaan is familiar to most people. This account of Israel's early history makes Jacob and his family go down to Egypt, about seventy in number. Here they were nourished during the famine and soon established in the land. How long they remained in Egypt has been much disputed, it is stated by St. Paul that from the date of the covenant with Abraham to the proclamation of the Mosaic law on Sinai, was 430 years,¹ but in an earlier book it is said that the Egyptians afflicted the Hebrews 400 years.² We should have little difficulty, however, respecting these two numbers, 400 and 430, one is only a round number, the other is likely to be a precise statement. Granting that there is some conflict between the biblical data we can turn to the testimony

¹Gal. 3:17; Cf. Exodus 12:40-41.

²Gen. 15:13.

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¹Gal. 3:17; Cf. Exodus 12:40-41.
²Gen. 15:13.

of the contemporary Egyptians and come to something approaching a final decision.

If Amenhotep IV was, as seems very probable, the Pharaoh who raised the young Syrian, Joseph, to a position of commanding authority, the beginning of the practice on the part of the Hebrews of living in Egypt would fall under the rule of that king, who ruled from 1375 to 1358 B. C. Accepting Rameses II, 1292-1225 B. C., as the Pharaoh of the oppression and dating the exodus about 1200 B. C., the duration of the sojourn would be about 150 years, this period according best with the facts of Egyptian and Hebrew history. In this study it is not of great importance to us how long the nation remained in Egypt; what we are concerned with is how far their civilization developed in this period over the semi-barbaric state which is known to have existed when the first Jews went to Egypt.

Unfortunately for us we know nothing directly of the Hebrew history in Egypt except in its last period, and even then we have only a few fragmentary notices. It is apparent, however, that by degrees the Hebrews laid aside their tent life as wandering shepherds and applied themselves in some cases to agriculture. They also dug canals from the east branch of the Nile to water their fields, while still others engaged in the arts and trades of Egypt. No country in these early days could boast of power which equaled that

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of Egypt; no other country was as advanced in civilization as Egypt was. A community settled in it as the Hebrews had been for sometime must have insensibly caught more or less the modes of thought and special ideas predominant on all sides round them.

Apparently the Hebrews were allowed to govern themselves. They were divided into tribes. It is not known whether this was their own division or one which was imposed on them; it is quite likely that it was their own choice. Usually the number of tribes is considered to have been twelve. The tribal constitution of these various clans was extremely simple. They had no common chief, but lived under the rule of their own elders or sheiks. This simple patriarchal form of government they retained in common with their related nations, the tribes of Edom and those descended from Ishmael and with the Horites or cave-men who lived among the Edomites and were of Canaanitish descent.³ The tribes of Israel had chiefs even before the time of Moses, there is no mention of their having been introduced by him. Under their princes or elders were subordinate chiefs of greater and lesser divisions, each tribe being apparently divided into twelve families or clans, and each clan into twelve "Houses of the Fathers".⁴ We are forced to think of Israel in Egypt, not as many have tended to do in the past, as a mere mob or multitude, but as a nation, or at least an organized commu-

3. Gen. 36:23-30

4. Numbers 1:2, Joshua 7:14, 17.

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³ Gen. 38:23-30
⁴ Numbers 1:2, Joshua 7:14, 17.

nity of which the unit was the family, ruled by the father, with very extensive power.

The different tribes showed very different characteristics, Reuben, Gad and Simeon clung to a pastoral life, while Benjamin was famous for its warlike skill and spirit. Military unions known as "thousands" were common to all; weaving perhaps one thousand soldiers from each, or bands selected from 1000 households. Ewalds thinks that the number of higher and lower elders was one thousand seven hundred and twenty-eight, i.e., twelve princes; twelve heads of families of each tribe; and twelve heads of houses of each family.⁵ From the earliest time the manhood of Israel were accustomed to work together; consulting and determining on their common interests. Every district and division of the whole people took part in these assemblies, by representation or otherwise, and nothing was binding on them which had not been voted at such a general parliament. Thus a healthy spirit of freedom and a patriarchal government obtained from the first, each "head" or elder in his particular sphere, representing its members in the gathering of the tribes at which at later times over 400,000 men fit for war met.⁶ Moses organized a senate or council of elders, which consisted of about seventy-two men, on whom lay the responsibility

⁵ Ewald; History of Israel p. 65

⁶ Judges 20:2.

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of serving as advisers of the nation.

In order to understand the methods used by the Egyptians to force the Hebrews into labor for them, it is well at this time for us to note the projects launched by the Egyptian government which required a great number of workers. The monuments of Rameses II are particularly famous. They still cover the soil of Egypt and Nubia in almost countless numbers and show him to have been the greatest builder of all the Pharaohs. Mariette says there is not a ruin in Egypt or Nubia that does not bear his name. Two grand temples at Ipsomhoul, hewn out of the hills with four colossal human figures 65 feet high at the entrances, were intended to perpetuate the memory of Rameses' victory over the Syrians and Ethiopians. At Thebes the great temple of Amenhotep III was finished and adorned with two huge obelisks in granite, one of which is now in Paris. At Thebes another temple was built by Rameses to commemorate his victory over the Hittites. Everywhere at Memphis, at Bushastia, at the quarries of Silsilis and at the mines of Sinai similar memorials occur. Rameses II founded towns, dug canals and filled the land with colossi, sphinxes, statues and other creations. He also erected a chain of fortifications along the entire north-east frontier of Egypt for 160 miles to defend it from invasion of the Syrians and Arabs.

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Such a building program called for a great expenditure

of human labor, and promoted much misery. Because of the crude implements which the men used who worked, as well as the natural hazards connected with such work, it is difficult to believe anything else but that thousands of prisoners of war and forced laborers must have died to put over these projects. A letter of the period is still extant which tells how the tax collector arrives in his barge at the wharf of the district to receive the government share of the crop. If he is not satisfied with the wheat that is given him, the man who defaults in payment is tied securely and placed on the barge, and his wife and children might likewise be taken.⁷ Any Hebrew who suffered such a fate was no longer free to enjoy the tribal government of his nation, but then became a slave of the state. It is said that 30,000 such men, not all Hebrews, died while digging out the Mabmondieh Canal with their hands, without picks or spades, or wheel-barrows, falling worn out with the toil exacted from them by the blows of their pitiless taskmasters. 120,000 men died digging out a canal to unite the Nile and the Red Sea in the reign of Pharaoh Necho, and after all the canal was abandoned because of an adverse oracle. The government made a pretense of taking care of those men who worked in tis service, but an interesting papyrus found in the tomb at Memphis throws light on this: "Wheat, meat, fish, fresh or salted, and

7. Geikie: Hours with the Bible p. 78, Vol. I.

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vegetables were provided by government for the laborers, but the quantity was at times so insufficient that the work had to be suspended from the weakness of the starved men".⁸

An old writing on the back of a papyrus apparently of the date of Seti, the founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty, brings vividly before us a picture of the brickmaking which was part of the labors of the Hebrews. "Twelve mason besides men who are brick moulders in their towns have been brought here to work at house building. Let them make their number of bricks each day. They are not to relax their tasks at the new house. 'It is thus I obeyed the command given me by my master!'"⁹ We cannot be certain that the twelve men spoken of here were Hebrews, but their case illustrates exactly the details of Hebrew slavery given in the book of Exodus.

One is not to understand from the foregoing statements however, that the Hebrews suffered continuous punishment in Egypt. The cases of cruelty given above would not apply to the life of all members of the race at this time. There was ordinarily nothing of the cruelty shown the Hebrews as slaves to the Egyptians, as was shown the Negroes in the slaves states by Americans during the period of American slavery. A man who paid his debts enjoyed comparative freedom as far as we

8. Ibid p. 81 - quoted from Chohas, Deux Pap. Hier, P. 24.

9. Ibid p. 83

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6. Ibid. p. 81 - quoted from Chabas, Deux Pap. Hier., p. 24.
7. Ibid. p. 82

are able to determine. If he was not a follower of some particular trade he could hire himself out as a laborer and receive pay for his work. A woman or young girl might be taken over by a family, but then her relationship with the family was not very different from that of any member of the family toward the others. She would do the work of the house, and other menial tasks that were asked of her but there is no indication that she was looked upon as being socially, mentally or physically inferior to those for whom she was working.

A difference can be found in the type of clothes worn by the Egyptian women and the Hebrew women. The latter wore long tight gowns which were tied at the neck and usually had long sleeves which nearly reached to the elbows. Sometimes a long loose robe was thrown over this. On special occasions an Israelite woman might be employed to dance for some festive event, at a time such as this, in addition to her ordinary dress she would wear a string of beads around the waist. The hair was generally worn bound at the back of the head in a sort of loop, or arranged in one or more long plaits at the back and eight or nine similar ones down either side of the head.

Those who have studied the life of the Hebrews in Egypt have usually been chiefly interested in the religious side of their life. However, one who would understand thoroughly the conditions of these people cannot well leave out the

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Those who have studied the life of the Hebrews in Egypt

have usually been chiefly interested in the religious side of their life. However, one who would understand thoroughly the conditions of these people cannot well leave out the

economic forces which did so much to determine their actions. Even though the toilers were left to govern themselves, no Israelite could feel while living in Egypt that he was a free man. The record in the Old Testament tells us that at the beginning Egypt was favorable toward the alien race, but as time went on and the burdens of the Egyptian state grew heavier "there arose a king who knew not Joseph"¹⁰. Then the Hebrews really learned the meaning of oppression.

At the very beginning of the Divine equipment of Moses for his work, it was prophesied to him that Jehovah would procure the people so much favor with the Egyptians that they would receive voluntary loans of vessels and clothes, which they could carry away. It is quite possible that this really happened. We are told that the Egyptians lent the departing people precious vessels and clothes, because Moses was held in great honor by the Egyptian people as well as by Pharaoh's courtiers. After the miraculous escape of the nation it was considered unwise to think of returning the precious articles that had been loaned them and so the people kept them. The economic status of the Hebrews was much higher when they left Egypt for Canaan than it had been while they were working in the country.

B. The Period of the wilderness.

We meet with the same difficulties in trying to build a conception of the life of the Hebrews in the wilderness

¹⁰ Exodus 1:8

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B. The Period of the Wilderness.

We meet with the same difficulties in trying to build a conception of the life of the Hebrews in the wilderness

that we faced with the study of the Egyptian period for the records of this period are very inadequate. Most of the accounts in the Old Testament which deal with this period are given by P, the priestly historian. Here we find elaborate accounts of the tabernacle,¹² laws as to priests and worship, and a highly artificial organization of the tribes with an extensive list of encampments.¹³ We must keep in mind that this source is one of the very latest, and it is the point of view of this writer to put back into the earliest days the institutions and customs of his own time. The list of stopping places has little value for us now, even if they are based on early sources, for most of them can no longer be identified.

The vital question to be faced in the wilderness was now to obtain enough food and water for the entire group, a number of biblical stories deal with this theme. "At Morah the spring was unfit, but became sweet, at Elim (the Hebrews) found a rich oasis".¹⁴ The manna and the quails provided meat and bread.¹⁵ The quail is a migratory bird, well known in the Sinaitic peninsula and all along the Mediterranean shores. Quails migrate in vast flocks, fly low

12. Exodus 25-31

13. Numbers 1-10:29

14. Exodus 17-1:7

15. Exodus 16-1:35, Numbers 11:4-10.

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and mostly with the wind; their wings are too light for their bodies and they become easily exhausted and fall a ready prey to man. There are two products of the Arabian Desert which might possibly be the manna referred to in the Bible. One is a by-product of the tamarisk tree; it is of the consistency of wax, is white in color, tastes like honey and melts in the sun. The other is lichen which forms as a crust of stones then rolls back and loosens so that it is sometimes driven by wind, sometimes washed by the rain into heaps. It varies in size from a pea to a hazel nut, can be ground like corn and easily baked. This latter staple of the desert is found in such large quantities that it might well have proven a significant factor in the Hebrew diet. Certainly, the condition of the land was seldom favorable toward agriculture, so that farming could not have been carried on extensively, while the cattle, that was a part of the pilgrimage, was held to be so valuable that the general opinion was that meat could be afforded only on festive occasions, and when it became absolutely necessary to eat meat because of a shortage of other foods. The Hebrews then found themselves faced with a serious problem in providing food for all, one that they had not known to any great extent in Egypt. Their desire to press ever on toward Canaan would have been weakened if they could have lived in the wilderness as they wanted to, but it was because of this failure that they ever felt the necessity of going on,

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and so even though we are told they remained in the wilderness forty years they never showed signs of attempting to build communities there.

It was during this period that Israel made serious attempts at some definite form of organization as a single body or nation. The biblical tradition furnishes, in the form of a family story, the origin of the judicial system prior to the entrance into Canaan. This story, though weak, in many details expresses the consciousness of Israel's indebtedness to the Midianites regarding fundamentals in their religious and political organization. As previously said the unit of society was the family, this always assumed a common blood and a common descent. A father had the privilege of selling his sons and daughters for slaves,¹⁶ until the time his right was limited by law.¹⁷ He could put his children and grandchildren to death, yet the power of the head of the family extended only to his immediate descendants; he had no control over other members of the group. Late in Israel's stay in the wilderness these heads of the families were formed into an inner council of the tribe and were called the "Elders". However, no formal limitation or right was assigned to them. In the meetings of such councils the views of the older members received more consideration, but all had a right to speak.

¹⁶ Exodus 21:7

¹⁷ Deut. 21:18-21

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¹⁶ Exodus 21:7
¹⁷ Deut. 21:18-21

There was no formal vote.

Because of the enormous size of the group it is difficult for us to see how it could be carried on effectively, but the records which describe the life of the nation during its period in the wilderness indicate communistic principles. Whatever food there was would first be gathered and then equally distributed among the families, this seems particularly true in the case of animals that were slaughtered.¹⁸ Throughout the entire period the group advanced, leisurely, allowing abundant time for stragglers to keep up with the main body. They rested and refreshed themselves at well chosen places, where all the cattle could be watered and fed. How long the stay was at each stopping place cannot be determined, but at all times it must have been more than one day for it is very unlikely that such a vast multitude could be able to break up and move in just one day, and everything was done out of consideration of the group as a whole.

The life of the Arab tribes, which today inhabit the same region, reveals in some ways the life of the ancient Israelites. Probably in ancient times the costume worn by the men was the same long tunic with the goat's hair mantle which protected them by day from the rain and sun. When night came this would be used as a bed. The women no doubt continued to wear the same style of dress that they became accus-

¹⁸ Geikie; Hours With the Bible, ;. 227

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tomed to in Egypt. But the matter of dress made a certain amount of industry necessary. It is quite probable that a few extra clothes were made by those who were able to when the nation left Egypt, but no one expected the journey to last so long and any clothes that were made would have become useless during this long period. However, it was necessary that all have clothes. It thus became the duty of the women to make these while the men gathered the food and made whatever utensils were necessary around the tents for cooking. During the course of "forty years" weaving could reach a high stage of perfection.

The closing weeks of the long stay at Sinai were fittingly marked by a celebration of the Passover. Tradition has assigned a lamb to each household during this period, if this is true there must have been a considerable flock by this time. A census was taken of the men from twenty years of age and upwards, showing a total of 603,550, exclusive of the tribe of Levi; this would indicate an aggregate in the whole host of from two to three million people. The calculation was based on the gross amount of a head tax of half a shekel, levied for the Tabernacle on each man. A separate census of Levi showed only twenty-two thousand males from a month upwards.¹⁹ These figures must be taken with care for the tendency was to highly exaggerate the truth.

¹⁹ Geikie, Hours With the Bible, p. 307, taken from Ewald, Geschichte Vol. II, p. 277.

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In the light of its historical background and the testimony of the earliest traditions it is possible to estimate the significance to the Hebrews of their wilderness experience. The necessities and hardships of their life gradually and inevitably gave them habits of courage, persistence and self-denial. Their strenuous life developed physical strength and endurance, courage and skill in warfare. It impressed upon them the necessity and advantages of combined action. Their constant feeling of hunger and fear of attacks deepened their sense of dependence upon divine power, and thus we find the economic condition of the people directly determining their religion. It is well at this point to mention the covenant which was an outgrowth of the days spent on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. This covenant contained much that would help the Hebrews as a nation and as individuals to deal with other peoples in future contacts. The first laws proclaiming social equality were now revealed. The ends of caste and social proscription were condemned, there were to be no slaves among the Hebrews, neither could any Hebrew sell himself or be sold for life. If any man forfeited his liberty he was to serve only six years and be free on the seventh. Laws were formulated which fixed the penalty for injuries to property, even when the hurt was not designed. In behalf of the poor, special provisions on the most generous scale were made and every seventh year all the fields, vine-

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yards and olive trees were left wholly to them. After a touch of specialized civilization, Israel was now dependent on its own resources for maintenance for the first time, it can truly be said that the economic conditions met in the wilderness prepared the nation more than any external factor for the life which was later to be lived.²⁰

²⁰ Kent, Heroes and Crises in Hebrew History, p. 216

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CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

A. The transition from Bedouin life to Agricultural life

The transition of any race or nation from nomadic life to agricultural is always a slow process, just as the change from agricultural life to industrial life is always slow. According to the narratives found in the biblical books, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua, the Hebrew tribes made a swift and complete conquest of the whole country of Canaan. We are led to believe from this source that for the exception of the inhabitants of Gidom and three other small cities, which succeeded in tricking the Hebrews into an alliance in accordance with the command of Moses all the Canaanites were stripped of their belongings and the land was divided by lot among the invading tribes. This suggests a sudden and violent displacement of the old population by the new. However, this purely idealistic picture of the course of events does not correspond with the facts in the case, but rather appears to be the creation of the latest historians, the Deuteronomists and the priestly writers. On several small points it is contradicted by the earlier documents, especially by an ancient account of the settlement in the first chapter of

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Judges.

According to this earliest account there was no invasion. After they had seized Transjordan and taken Gilgal, the Israelites are said to have separated. The first wave of invasion consisted of the tribes of Judah and Simeon who conquered the king of Jerusalem. The two tribes took the city of Hormah in the far south of Palestine; Caleb who marched with them took Hebron and Debir, the Kenites occupied a district south of Arad. A second wave of invasion was formed by the house of Joseph, i.e., by the future tribe of Ephraim, Manasseh and probably Benjamin.¹

The account in the book of Judges does not state the order in which the other tribes settled in Canaan. But it appears that the settlement of these tribes also was the result of individual enterprises, for they are represented as meeting with varying success, evidently according to their respective strength.

Until the beginnings of the monarchy, the Israelites were only able to occupy the country in the mountainous districts. It was extremely difficult for them to battle with the inhabitants of the plains for they were accustomed to fighting only on foot, with no weapons but swords and spears, and probably bows and slings. They were also not equipped

¹ Joshua 14;14-15.

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for siege operations and were able only on surprise attacks to take a few cities such as Bethel, Hebron, Debir and Shechem. "Up to the time of the monarchy the Israelite settlement consisted of only four somewhat compact groups, on the highland of Transjordanian plateau, in the hilly parts of Gallilee, in the hill-country of Ephraim, and in that of Judah."²

Since we understand that the possession of Canaan was not sudden but a slow process we realize that the Canaanites were neither driven out of the country nor exterminated; at the most they became tributary. This is expressly stated in the early account found in the book of Judges. "And it came to pass when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute and did not utterly drive them out."³ The entry into the country involved the acquisition of numerous arts. For the present and for a considerable time a part of the people continued to live their former nomadic life, but they were in the minority. As time passed, on the ground villages of firm clay huts or stone houses took the place of the encampments. Apart from agriculture and horticulture the Hebrews found it necessary to learn the rudiments of industry and trade, for the learning of them the conquerors, so far as they were conquerors, were in many ways dependent on the good-will of the natives.

2. Lods, Israel, p. 330

3. Judges 1:28.

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At this stage it seems that what we call industry played a small part in the life of the Hebrews. This fact is born out by the small number of crafts mentioned in the literature of this period. In the villages and fortified towns almost the only craftsmen known were the wandering smiths, who were unskilled in art. As time passed and the need increased, carpenters developed who were at the same time furniture makers, and general woodcraftsmen, who combined the trades of metal and stone working with their own work. In addition to the general craftsmen there was the potter,⁴ who imitated foreign models in a crude fashion. It is natural that there should be a much greater degree of specialization of crafts in the cities than in the country, but even here the growth was gradual and the realization of much that is truly significant belongs to a later period than that with which we are now dealing.

The Hebrews were not in Canaan long before they began to feel the force of opposition. The Philistines to the west were pressing into the country forming a continuous menace to peace among the people, and to add to their distress, an old foe, the Amorites, began to sweep in upon them from the desert to the east. It was repeatedly impressed upon them that only by union could they maintain their freedom in the midst of the

4. Kent, History of the Hebrew People, United Kingdom, p.89

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⁴ A. Kent, History of the Hebrew People, United Kingdom, p. 89

aggressive, hostile nations which encircled them.⁵ Local deliverers did not suffice, for the relief which they afforded was only temporary. The idea of a king was not foreign to their thought. The kingship was a long established institution among the neighbouring peoples, whom they regarded as their kinsmen, they became personally acquainted with the system through the ill-starred kingdom of Gideon.

It is very evident that Israel adopted those beliefs and customs which had been associated with the kingship for years before them. There was no constitution defining the rights of the sovereign, the clans, or the individual. The "law of the kingdom"⁶ is said to be not so much a political charter as a moral and religious dissertation; it belongs to a very late stage of development.⁷

Samuel, the kingmaker, was the last of the judges. Eli serves chiefly as a background for this more heroic figure. Because of a decided victory by the Philistines over the Israelites, when the two met at Aphek, tribute was exacted from Israel, and much of the land was occupied by the victors. The servitude of these unfortunate Hebrews to the Philistines was extremely humiliating. All smith shops in which weapons might be forged were prohibited,⁸ garrisons were situated at

⁵ Matthews, Old Testament Life and Literature p. 79.

⁶ Deut. 17:14-20

⁷ Israel, Lods p. 395

⁸ I Samuel 13:19-20

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⁵ Matthew, Old Testament Life and Literature p. 72.

⁶ Deut. 17:14-20

⁷ 1 Samuel, 13:19-20

strategic places as Gibeah in the midst of the conquered territory.⁹ Some of the Hebrews sought to escape trouble by crossing the Jordan, others wandered northward beyond the reach of the enemy, while some with wilder national hopes threw in their lot with the conquerors.¹⁰ When matters continually showed signs of growing worse, search was begun for the one most eligible to become king.

In a solemn conclave, with the approved rites, sanctioned by Samuel, Saul was crowned king at Gilgal. At first this meant the allegiance of only a few beyond his own tribe Benjamin. It was only a development from the judgeship, but this ambitious leader soon advanced the boundaries of his sway through the achievements of his arms. Saul's reign was in no way favorable toward rapid economic development, for it was filled with wars¹¹ which always prove great financial burdens. Also, there were money problems to be faced which came because of the newness of organization to the people. Some scholars consider Saul's reign a failure, and in some respects this seems to be the nature of the case, yet with all of his faults and failures he laid the foundation for an established army, he widened and made more secure than previously the boundaries of Israel, united a larger number of

⁹ I Samuel 13:3

¹⁰ I Samuel 13:7; I Samuel 14:22

¹¹ I Samuel 14:21

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9 I Samuel 13:5
 10 I Samuel 13:7; I Samuel 14:32
 11 I Samuel 14:31

tribes, and created more of a national spirit than had existed before. Apart from the reign of Saul the kingdom of David could scarcely have been possible.

After Saul's death, David became king. No single act of his did so much to exhibit his high qualities of statesmanship as his transference of his capitol to Jerusalem. This had profound influence on the economic development of the nation. Jerusalem was the strongest fortress in all Palestine, and any power which would be absolute in the land must hold it. David's reign which is described as "flexible and strong, patriarchal and tyrannical"¹³ lasted for 33 years. The royal house soon became rich and thus we find Absalom possessing flocks and herds. There was little scope for administrative or judicial arrangements in such a government. Centralization scarcely existed. There was no conscription, the permanent army of David was almost entirely composed of men of Judah and Benjamin, as well as strangers, especially of Gittites who followed David after his first sojourn at Gath.¹⁴ In the tribes of the north the only sign of a change of regime was a security which had not hitherto been enjoyed. The government was like that of an Arab tribe, with its supreme simplicity of proceeding. Private affairs continued to be treated at the gate of the city, however, in the

13. Renan; History of the People of Israel, p. 2

14. II Samuel 15:5.

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14. II Samuel 15:8.

neighborhood of Jerusalem suits were frequently brought before the tribunal of the king.

The administration placed little emphasis on building. Only one city, Jerusalem, constructed any large buildings. Royalty marked its presence there by a palace, an arsenal and a treasury formed of precious metal and stones. The number of persons employed in government service was very limited. "Zerinah was sopher, that is scribe or secretary of state, entrusted with the ordering and discharge of business. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was Mazkir, that is lord chancellor. These two functions presuppose the function of writing." ¹⁵ Neither the Canaanites nor the Israelites suffered a set back in development because of the Hebrew conquest. The former continued for generations to do the skilled work necessary in any organized civilization, whereas the latter learned the elementary stages necessary to trade, industry and finance and started its own history in a land it had long sought for.

15. Renan, History of the Hebrew People, p. 4

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B. The reign of Solomon

Economists tell us that the economic life of any people can be characterized by the business cycle. This is the belief that four periods commonly re-occur in economic fields. The first of these periods is known as prosperity, the second crisis, the third depression and the last period is known as recovery. The Hebrews constantly went through these different stages after their entrance into Canaan. The condition of Israel during the reign of Solomon was a strange union of simplicity and oriental luxury. Almost five hundred years had passed since the exodus and in that time the tent had almost disappeared except in the wilderness pasture. Many towns had grown up taking the place of the open spaces that had formerly served as grazing places for the herds. Shepherds were seldom seen in the populated areas, fields of grain covered the valleys and the soft upland slopes. These ordinarily gave bounteous harvests when the rains had duly fallen.

There are indications that revolts of subject peoples occurred at the beginning of Solomon's reign.¹⁶ Conquered oriental nations almost invariably tested the strength of every new monarch upon his accession. Rebellion broke out in both Syria and Edom, and before the new king was able to do anything in the way of improving the country internally he

¹⁶ I Kgs. 11:14-25

B. The reign of Solomon

Economists tell us that the economic life of any people can be characterized by the business cycle. This is the belief that four periods commonly recur in economic life. The first of these periods is known as prosperity, the second as crisis, the third depression and the last period is known as recovery. The Hebrews constantly went through these different stages after their entrance into Canaan. The condition of Israel during the reign of Solomon was a strange union of simplicity and oriental luxury. Almost five hundred years had passed since the exodus and in that time the land had almost disappeared except in the wilderness pastures. Many towns had grown up taking the place of the open spaces that had formerly served as grazing places for the herds. Herds were seldom seen in the populated areas, fields of grain covered the valleys and the soft upland slopes. These ordinarily gave bounteous harvests when the rains had duly fallen. There are indications that revolts of subject peoples occurred at the beginning of Solomon's reign. 15 Conquered oriental nations almost invariably tested the strength of every new monarch upon his accession. Rebellion broke out in both Syria and Edom, and before the new king was able to do anything in the way of improving the country internally he

found it necessary to combat the external forces that served as a constant threat.

The gold left by David to Solomon for the temple as stated in I Chronicles 22:14 and 29:4 was equal to 13,500,052 pounds tray; the silver on the same authority was equal to 127, 125,000 pounds tray. As the present value of the two metals this would equal 1,029,374,496 pounds sterling,¹⁷ or about four billion, six hundred and thirty-two million, sixty-three thousand, seven hundred and thirty-two dollars in American money. "This inconceivable number, however, is obtained by estimating the value of the talent by the Jewish standard. But the book of Chronicles in which the figures are given was written after the Babylonian exile, and it has been thought that the Chaldean talent is implied."¹⁸ If this is true the amount would be reduced to twenty-seven hundred million dollars. Our uncertainty about these figures makes them of doubtful use today.

We remember Solomon mostly for his building activities, not only did he undertake the works of fortification, but he also put himself to the task of making a royal city of Jerusalem. He extended the city northward so as to include the ancient Jebusite high place. This has been identified as the site of the temple which has done so much to perpetuate the name of Solomon. This temple was only one of the king's new

¹⁷ Geikie, Hours With the Bible, p. 405

¹⁸ Ibid

found it necessary to combat the external forces that served as a constant threat.

The gold left by David to Solomon for the temple as stated in I Chronicles 22:14 and 22:15 was equal to 13,500,000 pounds of silver; the silver of the same authority was equal to 135,000,000 pounds of silver. As the present value of the two metals this would equal 1,028,374,496 pounds sterling.¹⁷ or about four billion, six hundred and thirty-two million, six hundred and thirty-two thousand, seven hundred and thirty-two dollars in American money. This inconceivable number, however, is obtained by estimating the value of the talent by the Jewish standard. But the book of Chronicles in which the figures are given was written after the Babylonian exile, and it has been thought that the Chaldean talent is implied.¹⁸ If this is true the amount would be reduced to twenty-seven hundred million dollars. Our uncertainty about these figures makes them of doubtful use today.

We remember Solomon mostly for his building activities, not only did he undertake the works of fortification, but he also put himself to the task of making a royal city of Jerusalem. He extended the city northward so as to include the ancient Jebel Akhzab high place. This has been identified as the site of the temple which has done so much to perpetuate the name of Solomon. This temple was only one of the king's new

¹⁷ Gunkel, *Hours With the Bible*, p. 408
¹⁸ Ibid.

buildings. A description of the altars is found I Kings 7:1-12. The order in which he carried out his building program is probably as follows (1) the temple, (2) the house of the forest of Lebanon, (3) the hall of pillars attached to which was, (4) the hall of justice, (5) the king's palace, (6) the house of Pharaoh's daughter.¹⁹ In connection with the great buildings of the king there is one other improvement that was made by him that deserves some mention. Provisions had to be made for a larger water supply to enable the worshippers to carry on the many sacrifices of the temple, as there were few springs huge cisterns had to be hewn, it is estimated that these were capable of holding over ten thousand gallons of water. The source of the supply of water for these cisterns was an aqueduct from Solomon's pool near Bethlehem.

One only has to consider what was required to carry on such extensive building operations to realize that a constant drain must have been felt by the state treasury. Suitable timber could not be found in the immediate vicinity and so Solomon made an agreement with Hiram, King of Tyre, whereby timber could be transported from the Lebanon. Likewise Israel had not produced a sufficient number of skilled workmen so that Solomon also asked this neighboring monarch to supply him with laborers. All of this meant great expenditures, and in addition to the above named items there was the expense of

¹⁹ Robinson, History of Israel p. 253

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¹⁹ Solomon, History of Israel, p. 255.

transporting the timber and men from Lebanon to Jerusalem. The cost of this was decreased some by use of the sea instead of the land. To meet these demands Solomon had two main sources of revenue. The first was taxation, the second revenue collected from subject peoples.

Direct taxation in money seems to have been rare for the country still lived on the primitive plane and money was not common, there were no Hebrew coins at all. Wherever there was an exchange made it was done by weight. Taxation was therefore usually in kind, and took the form of a fixed proportion of the products from the farm. Archaeological evidences lead us to believe that the Israelites paid their taxes in corn, wine and oil. In spite of the great cost of Solomon's household²⁰ this would be enough to supply their wants. At times the Israelites complained of the heavy taxes that were being required of them, and were frequently reluctant in giving over their goods. In order to enforce the levies Solomon divided the country into twelve districts, over each district a prefect was placed whose duty it was to furnish a month's supply for the maintenance of the court.²¹ For some reason the territory of Judah does not seem to have formed part of any of the twelve provinces. Judah was considered the royal tribe, and was probably for this reason ex-

²⁰ I Kings 4:22

²¹ I Kings 4:7-19

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empted from tribute. Even this system failed to provide the monarch with sufficient income. One of the most pressing problems always was how to pay the workmen who were needed in such vast numbers. To meet this need Solomon imposed compulsory labor on the men of the nation.

Adoniram was appointed to take a new census of the men who were in the "Gerim" class, which means servant class, their number was found to be one hundred fifty-three thousand, six hundred. The architects needed ten thousand men to work steadily, but the Israelite farmers could not spare such a large percentage of their help at any one time, so Adoniram devised the following scheme: the one hundred fifty thousand gerim were divided into five sections of thirty thousand each. The first year one of these sections was drafted, another section was drafted for the second year, and so on, one section for the third, another for the fourth and another for the fifth year. In this way the members of one section would not be called for service for a second term until the fifth year after the expiration of their first term.²² These sections of thirty thousand men were three times as many men as were required by the architects at once. Each section was therefore subdivided into three subsections of ten thousand each. Then an arrangement was completed whereby each subsection worked for only four months in each year, but even

²² Sulzberger, The Status of Labor in Ancient Israel p. 27

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²⁸ *Switzerland, The Status of Labor in Ancient Israel*, p. 27.

these four months did not come successively but each group worked one month out of every three during the year of their service.²³

The great emphasis placed on laborers had its effect throughout the population. Three or four classes were distinguishable. The Hebrews, who formed the ruling caste; the native Canaanites who had gradually sunk in social position until at this time they were finally degraded to more or less complete serfdom; foreigners, probably imported to work; slaves either taken in the old wars or Canaanites who had sold away their freedom.²⁴ The whole of the Gibeonites had been made over to the priests as temple slaves, "to cut wood and draw water for the altar, and for other menial work".²⁵ Fragments of the old native clans who lived near Jerusalem were apparently used as slaves of the palace, and for public work generally, though some of them were seris with part of their time under their own control.²⁶ With such distinctions many petty prejudices tended to separate more and more the different classes. One favorable side of the government work is shown in the attempts made to do away with poverty. It is said that Solomon went too far in his efforts along this line. The law attempted to have it so arranged that there would be

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Leviticus 25:44

²⁵ Joshua 9:23

²⁶ Graetz, History of the Hebrew People Vol.I, p.226

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³³ Ibid
³⁴ Leviticus 25:44
³⁵ Joshua 9:23
³⁶ Great History of the Hebrew People Vol. I, p. 235

no poor in the nation. The kindred of an impoverished man were required to restore him to a simple independence.²⁷ All debts were cancelled at the end of each seven years, and if a patrimony had been alienated and not redeemed it reverted to the original owner or his family in the fiftieth year.²⁸

Though Solomon appears to have burdened his people too greatly by his mania for elaborate buildings, he balanced his failure along this line by the good he did the nation through his new ventures into commercial activities. In the field of commerce his reign proved nothing short of revolutionary. Solomon appears as the master middleman, who personally controlled and benefitted from the land traffic. He saw to it, that the merchandise passing along the caravan routes was better organized than previously. He catered to the needs of the Hittite and Syrian courts,²⁹ and carried on an active trade with Arabia in the south, also he could count among his business associates merchants in the north and east who sent these caravans to Jerusalem delivering goods and taking others away, always adding their quota to Solomon's wealth.³⁰ His trade relations with Phoenicia were the closest possible.

Even greater than the land trade was the maritime traffic which did more to add to Solomon's reputation. Ancient

²⁷ Deut. 15:4

²⁸ Leviticus 25:25

²⁹ I Kings 10:29

³⁰ I Kings 10:1-10; 4:24

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²⁸ Leviticus 25:28
²⁹ 1 Kings 10:29
³⁰ 1 Kings 10:1-10; 4:24

traditions told of Solomon's ventures on the Mediterranean and the Red Seas in partnership with Hiram.³¹ It is possible that the seaport of Gaza may have been used by Israel³² and Joppa and Dor may also have been open to them. We cannot be certain as to what distant ports these sailors visited. In I Kings 10:14, the gold received by Solomon in one year besides that of inland trade was six hundred sixty-six talents which equals seventeen million, nine hundred eighty-two thousand dollars. Of this the Ophir fleet brought from one voyage four hundred fifty talents or twelve million one hundred fifty thousand dollars in American money; from a second voyage it brought four hundred twenty talents or three million two hundred forty thousand dollars.³³ It is said that Solomon obtained the same amount from Hiram.

The sudden outburst of commercial activity in the reign of Solomon had the inevitable effect of causing prices to go up.³⁴ Even at this early day it was possible for international exchange to be effected by the use of gold,³⁵ Silver which had been used as a medium of trade all through the previous centuries underwent a fall in value. "Silver was thought nothing of in the days of Solomon for the Judges made silver like stones."

31. I Kings 9:26; 10:22

32. I Kings 4:24

33. Solomon and the Kings, p. 63ff

34. Wallis, God and the Social Process. p. 151

35. I Kings 9:14

36. Judges 10:21-27.

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- 33. Solomon and the Kings, p. 6317
- 34. Wells, God and the Social Process, p. 151
- 35. I Kings 9:14
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The extent of territory occupied by the twelve tribes at the death of Solomon is calculated by Kiepert as having been about thirteen thousand square miles. This is exclusive of the Philistine territory or of the subjugated regions outside. Of the thirteen thousand miles Israel occupied about nine thousand four hundred miles and Judah three thousand six hundred square miles. We get an idea of the size of Palestine by comparing this territory with the New England states Massachusetts and Connecticut which combined equal twelve thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine square miles in area.

In spite of the amazing prosperity which Solomon's peaceful and commercial policy spread throughout the land, the people were able to realize at an early date that their liberties were endangered by the new centralization which was being introduced. Before this period the Hebrews were the freest of all the ancient peoples, but Solomon founded a monarchy which threatened to reduce them, under his successor, to the levels of the subjects of a despot. To the Israelites it seemed that the whole race was being enslaved in order to glorify a single individual. Gradually the cycle turned, from prosperity the nation moved on toward the crises and when a few months had passed after Solomon's death the monarchy found itself inevitably moving into a depression.

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C. The Economic Aspects of the
Division of the Monarchy

The economic conditions prevalent at the time of Solomon had much to do with the future turn of events. The briefly lived unity of the Hebrew tribes at this time was rapidly passing away and jealousy as well as ill-concealed anger was easily recognizable. The tribes began to complain of the many taxes imposed on them, and they also complained against the recruiting of garrisons which seemed always in position to protect certain portions of Israel while others were left open to attack. As oppression in France brought on the French revolution, and later in Russia brought revolt against the Czars, so in Israel there suddenly appeared on the horizon a radical party to threaten the developing capitalistic tendencies which were enslaving the masses for the benefit of a selfish few.

A new fortress had to be built at Jerusalem by order of the aged king. One of the overseers appointed for this work - Jeroboam, the son of Nebat - appears to have been very active in stirring up discontent. He is also given credit for instigating a revolutionary plot. Solomon upon hearing of this conspiracy attempted to suppress it, but Jeroboam being warned in advance fled to Egypt. To the casual observer it would not seem that the peace of the nation had been threatened, but the very fact that a pretender should have risen up

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in opposition to the legitimate king created a mark that was not easily erased.

Upon the death of Solomon, his son, Rehoboam, experienced no opposition in Jerusalem and Judah in succeeding to the throne, these tribes had been favored by the former king, however. When he went to Shechem to receive the oath of allegiance from the northern and central tribes, he found them unwilling to tender it except under certain conditions; they would consent to obey him only on the promise of his delivering them from the forced labor which had been imposed upon them by his predecessor. Jeroboam, upon returning from exile, undertook to present this grievance to the new king. The final answer made by Rehoboam has become a classic, in the minds of such workers who search for words which express the attitude of those in authority over them. The new king indicated that he had no desire to make the burdens of the people lighter, but would if he so desired use his power to make them heavier. This was reason enough for a serious revolt starting. Rehoboam attempted to carry his threat into execution and sent the collectors of taxes among the rebels to enforce payment, but one of them was stoned to death and the king himself barely escaped the same fate from the hands of the infuriated mobs which gathered. The northern and central tribes immediately offered to crown Jeroboam and Solomon's descendant was limited in rule to only his own tribe.

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Two results were immediately felt after the division of the monarchy. All the tributary nations, Syria, Moab, Ammon, Edom and Philistia gained their independence as Rehoboam was unable to command them. Also the division that opened with bloodshed was continued by civil warfare. Military activities important to both nations were almost uninterrupted. Egypt had a strong ruler, Shishak I, of a new dynasty, who was eager for a conquest in a territory that centuries before had belonged to Egypt. Realizing the disunity prevalent in Israel he attacked it. Our narratives tell us that he conquered Jerusalem and robbed the temple in the fifth year of Rehoboam, that is, 927 B. C.³⁷ This account is substantiated by Egyptian records on the south wall of the temple at Karnak, here we have preserved a list of the captured cities, and we recognize a number of these as belonging to the north.

Economically both kingdoms present a pitiful picture. Tribute gone, control of merchandise lost, income lessened, both North and South alike were reduced to straits. "Shields of gold were replaced by shields of copper and the tent of Israel now took the place of palaces."³⁸ The Hebrews at this time were right at the beginning of things, before each lay a long struggle for wealth and authority. The glamour which characterised the social life of the preceding century was all gone, the north particularly had reverted al-

³⁷ I Kings 14:25-26

³⁸ Matthew, Old Testament Life and Literature p. 129

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³⁷ I Kings 14:25-26

³⁸ Nathan, *Old Testament Life and Literature*, p. 100

most to the peasant type. No permanent site here was chosen as a capitol. Jeroboam at first settled in Shechem and fortified it,³⁹ then he moved across the Jordan to Penuel,⁴⁰ and still later he returned to the west side of the river, settling in Tirzah.⁴¹

Judah had one great advantage over Israel, its inferiority in size and number was more than compensated for by the unity and homogeneity of its population. The tribe of Judah not only dominated the southern kingdom but it had so completely absorbed the Simeonites and the Arabian clans which it had found in possession of its southern territory, that it was a nation made up of one tribe. The interests of the people were the same, since their land presented little diversity and limited its inhabitants to the culture of the vine and the raising of sheep and cattle. In addition to this the capitol - Jerusalem - was so much larger than the other towns in the kingdom that they stood toward her only in a relation of dependence. While the Temple, with its splendid equipment commanded the reverence and homage of all the people and served therefore as a potent and uniting force.

These elements of strength and union were lacking in Israel. Ephraim, the leading tribe, shared its influence with the others. Rival sectional interests were an even

³⁹ I Kings 12:25

⁴⁰ I Kings 12:25

⁴¹ I Kings 14:17

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greater source of weakness. Great national barriers like the plain of Esdraelon and the deep valley of the Jordan kept the different sections of the northern kingdom from coming into close touch with each other. An inevitable result of the wide variations in physical contour was that its inhabitants were found engaged in a variety of occupations. In the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh agricultural and pastoral pursuits flourished side by side; on the rich plain of Esdraelon the life was wholly agricultural, in the north fishing as well as the culture of the soil occupied the people, while across the Jordan the majority of the inhabitants were shepherds. Consequently while Judah was a perfect social unit, bound together by the closest natural bonds, Israel was made up of a loose aggregation of such units.

The disruption of the Hebrew kingdom had profound bearing on the history of the nation and the world of that day. If it had been possible to maintain the policy of David for a few generations Israel would have had time to be united and consolidated into a real nationality. If an alliance could have been formed with the outlying and neighboring subject lands, which would have no doubt in a short time lost their individuality, a solid block would have been formed between Asia and Africa, controlling all commerce between the two continents, and no doubt with the power to dictate the international policy of both. "With Palestine as a basis the

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lands, which would have no doubt in a short time lost their individuality, a solid block would have been formed between Asia and Africa, controlling all commerce between the two

continents, and no doubt with the power to dictate the international policy of both. "With Palestine as a basis the

dominions of Israel might have spread North and East embracing the whole of Syria and keeping Assyria within narrow limits to the east. Indications point to the fact that an empire might have been formed which would have stood in history among the truly great empires of the world."⁴²

D. The reign of Ahab

The untiring efforts of archaeologists have done much to enable us to form definite opinions of conditions as they actually existed as far back as Ahab. This evidence is extremely valuable in that it substantiates the picture presented by Psalm 45 of royal life and society in the first years of the Israelite monarchy. The Harvard University archaeologists have in recent years uncovered much that gives us a clear picture of the grandeur of the northern kingdom in Ahab's day. This group of workers took two thousand nine hundred twenty-one photographs of objects and various marks of detail that are helpful along this line.

Ahab's predecessor and father, Omri, had at the time of crises in his government been obliged to make important concessions to Benhadad. The greater part if not all of the territory north of the plain of Esdraelon and east of the Jordan had been seized by his powerful foe. Ahab submitted

⁴² Robinson, History of Israel p. 280.

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to his demands until at length the Aramaean king assembled his forces and invaded Israel for the purpose of completely subjugating it, he succeeded in over-running its territory and shutting up the king of Israel within his capitol. Ahab consented to become Banhadad's vassal, but the latter wanted more, he desired the pleasure of having his soldiers plunder the palace for their own good. It was only natural that Ahab should resent this. He proceeded to go against the Arameans with his small army of less than eight thousand men. Though outnumbered, a decisive victory was won by the Hebrews, and a similar victory occurred the following year.

Ahab adopted the policy of Solomon, however, he showed far more energy as a military leader than the preceding monarch had shown. He engaged in extensive building at Samaria, and also built a second palace for himself at Jezreel. The new king made great use of the system of royal stewards established by Solomon to collect the taxes. These stewards he gave the power of deputies, it was their duty to gather the royal revenues from the estates or towns within their own prefecture and to deliver them at the palace store in Samaria with an accompanying note of entry in the accounts, so that the contributions could be credited to the senders. Judging from the number of senders, the provisions of Ahab's household, added to the cost of his magnificent

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"ivory palace" must have been a large burden on his subjects. Once more we find the economic cycle turning and Israel after having passed through the intervening periods, once again comes to a glowing age of prosperity. The firm but despotic rule of Ahab encouraged increasing wealth and prosperity. There was a great display of pomp and luxury. New cities were founded, perhaps as a result of the flourishing commerce with the coast.

Several cities of this period have been excavated, and we can to some extent reconstruct them. Houses appear to have been built of stone and brick, the brick being mostly sun-dried, it should be added this was the appearance of the houses in the city. As a rule in the country districts unburnt bricks were used almost always. In the cities the lower courses were formed either of stone or brick and the upper parts - from three to five feet upwards of sun-dried clay. The houses of the peasantry were probably single-story huts, with no windows beyond a hole through which the smoke of the fire could escape. Where peasants lived on the estate of wealthy farmers in the city their home might be more elaborate, having two or more stories with a flat roof which could be used as a promenade. As no glass was in use, windows were protected by lattice work. All kinds of pains were taken to make the houses to be occupied by the wealthy

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elaborate, it is said that many copies of the king's ivory palace were found throughout Israel.

It is very unlikely that in ancient Israel any family lived in an isolated house, whether large or small. It is true that we hear from time to time of single houses, but this seems most likely due to the fact that the neighbors are not involved in the particular narrative that is being given. At no time was the country secure enough for men to live alone, and with the houses together in groups the inhabitants could be sure of mutual protection.

The streets in the ancient cities were all very narrow; foot-passengers and mounted men might make their way through without much difficulty but wheeled vehicles found it difficult to find a city street wide enough for them to travel on comfortably. The streets were not only very narrow, but were usually choked with the goods of the various trades and occupations. There may have been many shops at this time, but we are led to believe that a large part of the trade was done by men and women who brought their wares into the street and spread them out to catch the eye of the people as they passed by.

The basis of Israel's economic life was the small peasant farmer "the crofter", who lived on the plot that had belonged to his family in the past and would be handed down

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peasant farmer "the crofter", who lived on the plot that had
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to his descendants. There were of course larger farms, but a person who owned one of these was regarded as being exceptionally wealthy. Whether the farm was large or small it was almost always worked by the owner and his household. We hear nothing of the absentee landlords receiving rent until the eighth century. We get a clear conception of the relationship between the peasant who lived on the hereditary farm and the royal court in the narrative of Naboth and his vineyard. This account tells us of the laws governing the control of privately owned property. We see the sturdy figure of the small farmer who owns his little plot of land and refuses to surrender it on any terms. The king is anxious to get possession of it, as it was not altogether desirable to have a private citizen owning land so near the palace. However, he is forced to realize that the refusal of the owner is final.

The dynasty of Ahab has been placed in an unfavorable light by the editors of first and second Kings, who have viewed the northern kingdom with a narrow restricted Judean outlook. Though this dynasty lasted only about fifty years it occupies a large space in the Biblical record, and contemporary history shows it to have been more important than the editors allow. Ahab showed his ability to lead when at once he realized the value to his people of maintaining a close alliance with Phoenicia. The same year he came to the Israelite throne, Baal-Azor III, a brother of Jezebel ascend-

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ed the Phoenician throne, followed six years later by Mattaubaal his nephew. Thus the alliance was very close, for Jezebel is said to have had great influence over Ahab, and we get inferences of this in the Naboth incident. Regardless of the religious criticisms that are made against this alliance, it was of great political and economic consequence, for it gave the Israelites not only an ally to the north, but convenient markets and seaports for their trade. "The corn, wine, fine oil, preserved fruits, dressed skins, honey, balsam and other products of Israel found a ready market in Tyre and Sidon."⁴³

⁴³ Jack, Samaria In Ahab's Time p. 110

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CHAPTER IV

THE EIGHTH CENTURY B. C.

A. The rise of Assyria.

Tiglath-Pileser the Assyrian king, hard pressed on every side by daring and restless foes, began his series of great campaigns by attacking those nations which were most troublesome and vulnerable. The first of these were the Aramaean tribes on the banks of the Tigris. To give these incorrigible banditti a free hand on his rear and brave the fortune of war in Armenia or Syria, without first teaching them a lesson in respect would have been simply to court disaster. Moreover the suzerainty of Assyria over Kordmuash placed on him the responsibility of safe-guarding Babylon, from those Aramaeans who might attack it on the east, while the Kalda were threatening its southern frontier. In the first battle Tiglath-Pileser overthrew the Aramaeans and drove them back from the banks of the lower Zob to those of the Uknu; all the countries which they had seized to the east of the Tigris at once fell again into the hands of the Assyrians.

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Gaining this first point, Tiglath-Pileser crossed the river and made a demonstration in force before the Babylon-

ian fortresses. He visited one after another, Suppor, Nippur, Babylon, Borsippa, Kuta, Kishu, Dilbot and Uruk and offered sacrifices to the prevailing Gods in all of them. He was thus able to show the great strength of the army which he had gathered around him. This easily won success brought to the monarch the desired results, he felt that all of the gods of the ancient sanctuaries had declared themselves satisfied with his homage and had granted him that religious consecration which had heretofore been lacking.¹

This brilliant warrior was quick to realize that the subjugation of the plain would have been of little advantage if the highlands were left in the power of tribes yet unconquered, who were allowed to pour down with impunity bands of rapacious freebooters on the newly liberated provinces; security between the Zob and the Ukru could only be attained by the pacification of Namri, and so in 744 B. C. Tiglath-Pileser made Namri the seat of war. All the Cassaeen and Babylonian races intermingled in the valleys of the frontier were put to ransom, these included the Bit-Sangihuti, the Bit-Khombau, the Barrua, the Bit-Zualzosh, the Bit-Matti, the Parsua, the Bit-Zatti, the Bit-Zabdadain and the Arakuttu by which the conqueror gradually made his way into

1 Annals of Tiglath-Pileser II, p. 1-20.

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¹ Annals of Tiglath-Pileser II, p. 1-20.

the heart of Media, reclaiming districts into which none of his predecessors had ever penetrated.² He united the most remote of these to his own empire and placed them under an Assyrian governor. It was a great time for Assyria when the conquerors returned with a convoy of sixty thousand five hundred prisoners and countless herds of oxen, sheep, mules and dromedaries.³

Even this great success was not enough to satisfy the ambitious Tiglath-Pileser. He at once set out to settle with Uroetu. This was a decisive battle and the monarch realized that, even though his army was at the peak in condition, everything must be carefully planned and well worked out. The army therefore crossed the Euphrates in the spring of 743 B. C. spreading fear among all the smaller nations settled in their path. Upon reaching Aphod the town threw open its gates offering no resistance whatever, but while preparations were being made to claim the booty, news come that Shorduris was hastening up to the rescue. Tiglath-Pileser and his army at once struck camp and marched out to meet the rival. The battle, which lasted furiously for a day, was a decisive victory for the Assyrians, who then marched on to Kinalna, sacked it, built a fortress there and left a governor and

2. Passing of the Empires - Maspero p. 141.

3. Ibid, p. 142.

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3. Ibid., p. 142.

garrison to thwart any attempts at a counter-attack. A rebellion, which was probably instigated by one of Tiglath-Pileser's own men, was the only thing which eventually forced the ruler to return to the home base, which occurred in 738 B. C.

Though Tiglath-Pileser added colony to colony in distant regions annexed by him, he organized them on a different plan from that which had prevailed before his time. His predecessors had usually sent Assyrians to these colonies and filled the villages vacated by them with families taken from the conquered regions, but it was realized that if this plan was followed now the whole of the Assyrian population would soon be scattered over the dependencies, and the hereditary state would be inhabited by a heterogeneous collection of aliens. The emperor therefore left his native Assyrians for the most part at home and only effected exchanges between captives. Those who were taken war captives were allowed to take their wives and children and all their belongings with them, even their gods. They were drafted into towns and country districts sufficiently numerous to be self-supporting, but yet not large enough to allow them to re-establish themselves as a distinct nation, in their new home.

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We have few details which enable us to understand how these provinces were ruled. The various functionaries,

governors of towns, tax collectors, heads of stations and officers were for the most part selected from among natives, who had thrown in their lot with Assyria. The kings and chiefs whose territory was attached to a given province either took their instructions from Nineveh or were sometimes placed under the control of a resident, who kept watch over their movements and reported them to the suzerain and saw to it that tribute was regularly paid and that military service was duly rendered. Governors and residents alike kept up a constant correspondence with the court, and in the few letters that have been found and preserved we find that a minute account of even the most trifling occurrences was required of them by the central authorities. They were obliged to report any fluctuation in the temper or attitude of their subordinates, they also had to record the transfer of troops, the return of fugitives, the pursuit of deserters and chance scuffles between soldiers and natives as well as the punishment inflicted on the rebellious.⁴ This system proved defective for it exposed to strong temptation the functionaries whose loyalty was most essential to the proper working of the administration. However, its dangers were outweighed by such important advantages that one is forced to think of it as a real improvement over the haphazard methods

4. Smith, G. A. History of Assurbonipal p. 197-200.

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⁴ Smith, G. A. History of Assyria, p. 127-128.

of the past.

Assyria's neighbors would have been able to stop her advances if only they had united themselves against her. But most of these countries, including Israel, were at this time extremely weak because they were engaged in minor conflicts among themselves. Tiglath-Pileser was able to gain lasting power in Israel because of the weakness of Jeroboam's successors. Each year the resources of the nation were drained to pay the heavy tribute which was exacted. Section after section of the kingdom of Jeroboam II was gradually broken off and annexed to Assyria, until at the end of eighteen years the capitol itself was brought under the same sway and Israel as a nation ceased to exist.

B. Political conditions in Israel.

Jehoahaz became king of Israel in 797 B. C., We know little of him as a man, but mention must be made of him for during his reign we find the everpresent economic cycle turning again. For fifty years Syria had harassed the outskirts of the country and had even invaded the chief cities; for fifty years Israel proved the victor. Just at the psychological moment a small nation of which little is known rose up to make serious inroads of Syria, it is generally believed that this enabled Jehoash to gain his victories.⁵ At the same time revolution was taking place in Judah. Joash had

5. II Kings 13:25.

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been slain by conspirators, and Amaziah his son was made king in his stead who immediately set to work to revenge his father's murderers. His first step was to make war on Edom, and there he gained an important victory capturing one of the most promising cities.⁶ Amaziah apparently was tired of his vassalage, or it may have been that he suffered from a desire to extend the bounds of his territory northward. At any rate he attacked Jehoash and was severely defeated at Beth-Shemesh⁷ and taken prisoner from Lachish. Two hundred yards of the Jerusalem wall were breached, the temple and the palace were plundered by the northern army and Judah was made tributary to Israel. It was then easy for the north to hold Judah in bondage.

Fortunately two very capable kings came to the Hebrew thrones at the same time. Jeroboam II in Israel and Uzziah or Azariah in Judah. The quietness of this time made the development of the resources of each country possible. Uzziah built Elath and restored it to Judah and Jeroboam restored the old border of Israel.⁸ Jeroboam II was succeeded by his son Zechariah, but he was slain after a reign of only six months.⁹ His murderer, Shallum, was in turn

⁶ II Kings 14:1-7

⁷ II Kings 14:7-14

⁸ II Kings 14:22-27

⁹ II Kings 14:29

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8 II Kings 14:1-7
7 II Kings 14:7-14
6 II Kings 14:23-27
5 II Kings 14:28

disposed of at the end of a month by Menahem.¹⁰ In 738 B. C. Tiglath-Pileser III invaded the country and exacted an enormous tribute of two million dollars or the equivalent in present day values of something like thirty million dollars as the price for the recognition of his claim to the throne.¹¹ In order to raise this Menahem placed a tax of about thirty-five dollars a piece on all the men of wealth. This would require about sixty thousand men who were deemed able to make such a contribution, and serves to give us a fair estimate of the prosperity of the country at the close of Jeroboam's reign. Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, but the spirit of revolt was high among his subjects because of the pro-Assyrian policies of Menahem and he was soon driven from the throne by Pekah, who attempted to make a union with Rezin of Syria in order to make a united front to withstand Assyria. Judah, however, was unwilling to join with such an agreement and went far enough to form an alliance with Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 B. C. The same year the Assyrian army took Gaza and laid waste Damascus which fell in 732 B. C. Northern Israel suffered an attack and four important cities were taken. Gilead and Galilee were subjugated and in accordance with the widespread system

¹⁰ II Kings 15:8-22

¹¹ II Kings 15:19-20

disposed of at the end of a month by Menander. In 738 B. C. Tiglath-Pileser III invaded the country and exacted an enormous tribute of two million dollars or the equivalent in present day values of something like thirty million dollars as the price for the recognition of his claim to the throne. In order to raise this Menander placed a tax of about thirty-five dollars a piece on all the men of wealth. This would require about sixty thousand men who were deemed able to make such a contribution, and serves to give us a fair estimate of the prosperity of the country at the close of Jeroboam's reign. Menander was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, but the spirit of revolt was high among his subjects because of the pro-Assyrian policies of Menander and he was soon driven from the throne by Pekah, who attempted to make a union with Rezin of Syria in order to make a united front to withstand Assyria. Judah, however, was unwilling to join with such an agreement and went far enough to form an alliance with Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 B. C. The same year the Assyrian army took Gasa and Iddi were taken, which fell in 733 B. C. Northern Israel suffered an attack and four important cities were taken. Gilad and Galilee were subjugated and in accordance with the widespread system

of colonization a part of the population was deported.¹²

Pekah was dethroned by Hoshea 732 B.C., in the way which was generally accepted at this time. It is believed that this new ruler paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III as a token of his allegiance. But when Shalmaneser IV became king of Assyria in 727 B.C., Hoshea withheld payment and formed an alliance with So. This angered the new ruler and he immediately took steps to punish the rebel Hoshea. In 724 B. C. the Assyrian army made attack and towards the end of 722 B. C., shortly before Sargon II came into power, Samaria was compelled to open its gates to the conquerors. Assyrian records have been found which claim that twenty-two thousand, two hundred ninety of the nobles were deported to three quite widely separated Assyrian provinces, and here they are said to have been assimilated by the people and lost forever to national history.

C. Home life in this period.

We are now ready to turn to the actual home life of the people during the eighth century. For this particular phase of the study one must rely mainly on the work that has been done by archaeologists in recent years. The efforts of the group working under Dr. Macalister have proven very useful

¹² II Kings 19:29

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as have those also of the Harvard University archaeologists who have centered their work mainly around Samaria.

This was a period of great display among the class of Hebrews who could afford it, even more so than was the reign of Solomon. Everything was done by the wealthy to make it possible always for strangers to realize their financial status, while the poor involuntarily betrayed their condition. The difference between the two classes was clearly brought out in the homes of the two. A Hebrew custom was that where suitable means of support could be found for all, the original members of the family would stay in direct living contact, including the grandparents and frequently the aunts, uncles and cousins. For a large family of the wealthy class where the grand parents had several married sons staying with them, a number of courts would be found leading into one another with rooms around each, set apart for the several households. Ordinarily these rooms did not communicate with each other, but all had doors which opened into the court. As a protection against sun and rain a roofed colonnade was placed around the entire area, or perhaps a veranda would be projected from the wall. The roof of the house was usually made by placing one or more large logs across the top with small pieces resting on this. All of this was then covered with a layer of broom or perhaps

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reeds then dirt was spread to a thickness of several inches. In this way it was possible to make the homes waterproof with little expense, for all this material could be found in abundance in the densely populated area.

In Amos 3:15 and Jeremiah 36:22, references are found to winter and summer houses. We must admit the impossibility of our making dogmatic statements as to what is meant by these references, they probably mean that the wealthy were in the habit of building homes in the city for winter and places outside the city for summer. However, some scholars believe that the prophets are only referring to the custom used by the rich in building their homes. It may have been the practice to build an upper story to the home which was so constructed that on the hottest days of the year, a breeze might be found there, this would be used in summer because of the comfort it afforded, and therefore might easily be called a summer home. While on the other hand the winter home would be the story so constructed that it was easily heated with braziers on the coldest days of the year.¹³ Either of these interpretations seems quite logical.

In the homes of the wealthy, special care was taken to make it comfortable for any guest that might come. This is natural for always the peoples of the East have been known

¹³ Cf. Mackie, Bible Manners and Customs p. 92

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In the homes of the wealthy, special care was taken to make it comfortable for any guest that might come. This is natural for always the peoples of the East have been known

for their hospitality. The guest room was the choice room of the whole house, it would be more open than the other family rooms, in order to give the visitor the best possible view as well as to give him or her the advantage of all the air and sunshine possible. During the days of glory under Solomon a guest room might contain only a single pallet, a table, a stool and a lamp-stand, but this crude way of preparing for visitors had passed,¹⁴ now the couch was ornamented with ivory,¹⁵ and everything else in the room in accordance. The Harvard excavators working in the palace yard at Samaria found some handles that give the impression of having once been parts of hand mirrors.¹⁶ It is quite likely that the boudoir of the lady of our own time is simply a copy of that of the lady of the eighth century, for her room also may have been provided with every sort of beauty aid, even ivory handled mirrors. Imported carpets of wool, camel-hair or silk might lie on the marble floor,¹⁷ swords, daggers or other implements might be hung as ornaments on the wall, particularly if the men of the house had achieved fame as warriors. An ivory or gold stool, chair or bench would be other valuable articles to be found there.

Glass was still not in use, but the windows were con-

¹⁴ II Kings 4:10

¹⁵ Amos 6:4

¹⁶ Reisner, Harvard Excavations at Samaria p. 119

¹⁷ Mackie, Bible Manners & Customs p. 92

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14 II Kings 4:10
15 Amos 6:4
16 Helander, Harvard Excavations at Samaria p. 119
17 Mackie, Bible Samaria & Gilead p. 93

structed of wooden bars and a frame of lattice, screened the lower half of the window to make it possible for one on the inside to look out without being seen. For protection at night heavy but relatively crude shutters might be closed. The houses of the city were so built that windows were ordinarily not placed over the street, but a balcony might project over it with windows commanding a view, such windows would be highly decorated to attract the attention of people below.

To add to the pleasures of home life the wealthy frequently made use of musical instruments, the Hebrews are ordinarily very fond of music and at their many banquets they found it most difficult to get along without this entertainment. References are made to trumpets commonly used in this period. For the best description of these instruments we find it well to turn to the work of Josephus. "In length the trumpet was less than a cubit. It was composed of a narrow tube somewhat thicker than a flute, but with so much breadth as was sufficient for admission of the breath of a man's mouth, it ended in the form of a bell, like common trumpets."¹⁸ Aside from the more pleasurable use of the trumpet the priestly class also made use of it to notify the people of feasts.¹⁹ To accompany the trumpet the psaltery was

¹⁸ Josephus, Antiquities Vol. III, ch. 12 para. 6.

¹⁹ Hosea 5:8

arranged of wooden bars and a frame of lattice. across the lower half of the window to make it possible for one on the inside to look out without being seen. For protection at night heavy but relatively ornate shutters might be closed. The houses of the city were so built that windows were ordinarily not placed over the street, but a balcony might project over it with windows commanding a view, such windows would be highly decorated to attract the attention of people below.

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commonly used. The shape of this instrument is unknown, some suppose it to have been like an inverted Delta, others say that the name suggests that it was shaped like a guitar, and they believe that it resembled that instrument in its general shape. Of the psaltery Josephus has the following to say: "It had twelve musical notes and was played upon the fingers."²⁰ Apparently these twelve notes were represented by twelve strings, it may be that the number differed in different varieties of the instrument.

These two instruments were the ones most commonly seen and heard by one who lived in the eighth century, their popularity over the other instruments that existed may have been due to the practical use to which they both could be put and also to the fact that neither was very expensive. One other instrument that we know existed was the organ or ugah, this was one of the most ancient instruments. It appears that this was used on special festive occasions. Its general characteristics are not known to us, the oldest belief is that it resembled the bagpipe and possibly consisted of two pipes fastened in a leathern bag, one above and one below. Through the upper pipe the bag was filled with air while the lower pipe had holes which were played on with the fingers like a flute, the bag meanwhile rising

²⁰ Josephus Op. Cit. Vol III, ch. 13, para. 3.

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³⁰ Josephus Op. Cit. Vol III, ch. 13, para. 3.

and falling like a bellows by means of pressure.²¹ Some authorities identify the organ with the syrinx, but details of this instrument are lacking. The Hebrews probably made use of these instruments with the possible exception of the trumpet, which might seem too blaring in their worship services. One was almost certain to find one of these at least in any family that was recognized as having wealth.

As the Hebrews used music for recreation and entertainment they also made use of other pastimes which seem modern to us. Perhaps the game most generally engaged in today in Palestine is backgammon and it may be that this game is an outgrowth of very ancient ones, at least this is the opinions of excavators who have worked in Palestine. Working in a settlement that has been identified with the eighth century B. C., a group of workers uncovered boards which were, or are, ruled in squares by means of vertical and horizontal lines.²² Sometime perfect squares are found of twelve vertical and twelve horizontal rows of compartments; at other times only three horizontal and six vertical rows are found, either of these boards could well be used for a game similar to backgammon. Some of them are characterized by squares or crossing of lines marked with X, but since we have no knowledge of the details of the game we cannot say what this

²¹ Freeman, Bible Manners & Customs p. 221

²² Macalister, Century of Excavation in Palestine, p. 244

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²² Friedman, *Biblical Manners & Customs* p. 281.
²³ Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine*, p. 244.

mark stands for. For those of the wealthy class who were free from work, such pleasures would be of great aid in helping them pass the time away, or in freeing them from the worries that are usually associated with having a lot of money.

The family continued to be the unit of society and as said previously all attempts were made to keep all its members together, because of this much emphasis was placed on the family meals, for this might be the only time when they had the privilege of group conversation. The chief meal used at the Hebrew home was the supper which came a little after sunset. The chief article of food was bread, and even those women, who were fortunate enough to have servants delighted in preparing this and serving it to the members of their household. Because of the bounteous supply, fowls comprised an important part of the meals, and for the same reason, fish was frequently served. The latter could be taken in great numbers from the Mediterranean Sea and also the Sea of Galilee. The Israelites continued to think their cattle too expensive for food, but the milk and butter taken from the herd was always freely used. Cheese was also used; we have reference to its having been used at even an earlier date.²³

Because so much emphasis was placed on the meal itself,

²³ I Sam. 17:18

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Because so much emphasis was placed on the meal itself,

great care was also taken in its preparation. Evidently the women, whether servants or housewives, went about this in a very clean way,²⁴ and demanded a number of utensils with which to do their work, some of those that have been found which are believed to have been used at this period are (a) ovens, in which the baking and cooking in general was done, (b) baking trays, (c) bowls, jars, pitchers, saucers, cups, (d) feeding bottles, (e) glassware, (f) forks and (g) numerous pans,²⁵ knives were generally made of iron in the eighth century²⁶ a great improvement over preceding centuries when most of them were made of flint.

Most of this description of the home life in Israel at the time of our study, has had to do with the wealthy class, but as in any society there was a large portion of the population which was deprived of many of the finer things mentioned above because of their financial status. One is not to be deceived by the general appearance of prosperity in the two Hebrew kingdoms for there continued to be a very large peasant class. The ordinary home of the peasant consisted of one room which contained little furniture, merely enough to enable him to prepare his simple meals and eat them and provide some kind of a place for him to retire at night. If the house consisted of two rooms the custom was

²⁴ Mackie, Bible Manners and Customs p. 97

²⁵ Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 149-152

²⁶ Isaiah 22:22

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⁸⁴ MacKie, *Bible Lands and Customs*, p. 87.
⁸⁵ Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, p. 142-143.
⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

not to build these rooms side by side, but with the breadth of a room left between them. Between the ends, a wall was built connecting the two, this provided as an open court for the house. As the inhabitants became able they might increase the size of the house by adding to the side of it. The homes of the peasants were almost always more united than those of the wealthy. Regardless of the occupations of the father the organization of labor was so arranged that his whole family would usually work along side of him.

The Hebrews continued the practice of requiring the man who would marry to pay a purchase price for his wife-to-be, this was considered the only way of acquiring possession of her. Such consideration of the marriage state is certain eventually to have its effect, and in this instance it reacted in favor of the practice of polygamy, a custom which marred the beauty of social life among the Hebrews. From the time of Solomon on, wives tended to increase in number in proportion to a man's wealth, and therefore little respect was held by the wealthy class for the marriage vows. Since the woman was the man's property he could divorce her at will,²⁷ or send her back to her own relatives. The only protection given the woman who was divorced was that she was forever freed from further obligations to her husband. The Deuteronomic law decreed that if a man falsely charged his wife

²⁷ Deuteronomy 24:1

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with unchastity before marriage, or if he seduced her and had been compelled to marry her in consequence, he forfeited his right ever to put her away.²⁸

D. The land and its products.

The area of Palestine at present is approximately ten thousand five hundred square miles, a few hundred square miles, larger than the state of Massachusetts. Dr. Gore describes it as a "central block of mountains surrounded on three sides by plains and on the fourth by the deep rift of the Jordan valley."²⁹ The country may be easily and conveniently divided in the following way:

- I. The South Country
- II. The Maritime Plain (Philistia, including the Shephelah and Sharon)
- III. The Plains of Esdraelon and Acre
- IV. The North Country (Galilee, including Gennesaret)
- V. The Central Range (Samaria, Mount Ephraim and Judea)
- VI. The great Rift (the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea)
- VII. Eastern Palestine.³⁰

It is generally believed that the population of Palestine could hardly ever have been more than four times the present population, which is estimated at six hundred fifty thousand people. During its most flourishing period it is probable that almost two hundred fifty or three hundred persons would

²⁸ Deut. 22:13,19,28.

²⁹ Gore, New Commentary on Holy Scripture, p. 633

³⁰ Ibid

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²⁸ Deut. 24:1-4, 28.
²⁹ Gore, New Geography of Holy Scriptures, p. 633.
³⁰ Ibid.

inhabit a square mile, while at present there may be about sixty five on the same area, and this number is above the average.³¹ In general there is much variance in the climate, the days frequently being very warm and the nights cool. The winter rains are normally very heavy, and in addition to these there are higher falls in autumn and early spring, but still the country always suffers from a shortage of water, for the water that falls is instantly absorbed by the porous rock, or is carried off in cataracts down steep ravines. The entire life of the country is determined by the climatic condition, more so than is normally true in other countries.

Because of the seriousness with which the rainy season has to be taken, the Hebrews have always found it necessary to be strict observers of an agricultural calendar. This calendar can be traced to a period beyond the eighth century B.C., it probably was originated in its present form in the eleventh century B.C. All of the necessary data in connection with it has not been found; for instance we cannot account for all of the months of the year, however, the following eight have been recovered:

1. Month of ingathering
2. Month of sowing
3. Month of the late sowing
4. Month of the flax harvest
5. Month of the barley harvest
6. Month of the harvest of all other grains

³¹ Encyclopedia Biblica, p. 3550

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6. Month of the harvest of all other grains

7. Month of pruning the vines
8. Month of summer fruit.³²

With this as a guide the farmers of the two kingdoms planted fields each year, confident of success because of their strict adherence to past customs. The methods of agriculture seem to have been of the simplest nature. The soil was turned up and prepared with a plow, apparently not a very large or even a very effective instrument. A number of plows were found at Megiddo in the ruins of a blacksmith shop,³³ they have a close resemblance to the farm implements used today, though some of them tend to be diamond shaped. These plows could always be easily handled by one man, and were usually pulled by oxen though some farmers used mules. Apparently little was known of methods of making the soil more fertile. Nowhere do we have any reference to manure being used. The farmers seemed perfectly content to rely on the natural richness of the soil. In places where there was not enough ground to be broken to necessitate a plow the farmers made use of other implements which correspond with our hoe and mattock. During the eighth century some of these were made of bronze and iron, while others continued to be made of flint. Either of these three instruments or all of them were owned by every farmer. There was little

³² Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 138

³³ *Ibid*

V. Month of pruning the vines
B. Month of summer fruiting

With this as a guide the farmers of the two kingdoms planted fields each year, notwithstanding of success because of their strict adherence to past customs. The methods of agriculture seem to have been of the simplest nature. The soil was turned up and prepared with a plow, apparently not a very large or even a very effective instrument. A number of plows were found at Megiddo in the ruins of a blacksmith shop,³⁸ they have a close resemblance to the farm implements used today, though some of them tend to be diamond shaped. These plows could always be easily handled by one man, and were usually pulled by oxen though some farmers used mules. Apparently little was known of methods of making the soil more fertile. Nowhere do we have any reference to manure being used. The farmers seemed perfectly content to rely on the natural richness of the soil. In places where there was not enough ground to be plowed to necessitate a plow the farmers made use of other implements which correspond with our hoe and mattock. During the eighth century some of these were made of bronze and iron, while others continued to be made of flint. Either of these three instruments or all of them were owned by every farmer. There was little

³⁸ Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible*, p. 138
38 Ibid

in the process of caring for the growing grain that need demand our attention, for this of necessity was very much like the methods used today, all very simple.

After the grain was cut it was taken to the threshing floor to be threshed. These floors were often a comparatively level portion of rock which formed a part of a high place or sanctuary. Several days were necessary to complete a threshing. Sometimes the cattle were driven over the grain, a process taken from ancient Egypt; at other times a kind of sledge drawn by cattle was driven about over the grain.³⁴

We also hear of the threshing floor where the grain was beaten from the ear with a sledge, a flat instrument made of heavy board and studded with stones and pieces of metal.³⁵ After the grain had gone through the threshing process another method of preparing it for use was used called winnowing. The grain was winnowed by taking a large shovel and tossing a portion of it into the air, when the wind would blow away the chaff and allow the grain to fall back to the floor. To cleanse it of grit and dirt a sieve was used. In the case of small crops they might be beaten out with a flail.³⁶

The operation of the granaries was one of the most thriving businesses connected with agriculture. Some of them were

³⁴ Isaiah 41:15

³⁵ Robinson, History of Israel, p. 318

³⁶ Isa. 28:27

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connected with private homes and evidently belonged to individuals, but others that have been uncovered are so large and so much grain has been found in them that it is held they must have been public enterprises.

Aside from the regular planting of grain the vine has always had an important place in the agricultural life of Palestine. Its culture is one of the leading characteristics of the land.³⁷ The locality of the vineyards has remained much the same throughout the centuries, the position most suitable being on the hillside or the gentle-sloping ground at the foot of the hill. The vineyard requires a lot of preparatory work. A wall has to be built around it. Where there is irregular rocky ground such as is found in Palestine this has to be laid off in terraces, one below the other on the slope, varying in width from one to four or five yards; the large rocks have to be broken up and built with stones into these successive rough walls, varying in height from two to six feet. Then much more thoroughly than is thought of for the grain fields, the ground must be cleared of thorns and thistles. In the case of a large vineyard a winepress has then to be dug, and a room made for the watchman. This is a description of the method of caring for the vineyards today, but this is one phase of activity

³⁷ Isaiah 5ff

connected with private homes and evidently belonged to individuals, but others that have been discovered are so large and so much grain has been found in them that it is held they must have been public enterprises.

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that is almost identically the same today as it was in the eighth century B. C.³⁸ The only thing archaeologists have been able to uncover from this great field of agricultural endeavor has been a few wine vats.

A very similar occupation to that of caring for the vineyard was the growing of olive trees, a very large occupation in Palestine. The process of preparing the olives for use is not very different from that used in preparing the fruit of the vine. The olive press had in addition to the vat, an upright stone with a large hole in it. In this hole a beam was inserted, which rested on the olives to be pressed, and the person operating the vat would revolve this beam according to his desires. The climate of Palestine has always proven very helpful to those engaged in the work of growing olives. The same is true of growing figs.³⁹ The most important products of Palestine were corn, wheat, barley, figs, olives and grapes. All of these were grown in great quantities.

E. Industry and labor.

After having traced the development of Israelite life this far, noticing the improvements that were made in all

³⁸ Isaiah 5:1-8

³⁹ Josea 9:10; Jer. 24:2

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After having traced the development of Palestine life this far, noticing the improvements that were made in all

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things that seem to effect the economic life of the nation, it seems a complete shock to us to find scholars saying that industry never developed to anything worthwhile in the Hebrew kingdom⁴⁰ and yet this is exactly the testimony given by all records known to us. Practically all of the industrial activity was confined to the home. But we have rather complete descriptions regarding the process of making certain things.

One of the best known industries was that of making pottery. It should be said here that the word industry as used does not refer to the highly developed organization known to America today, this was the most elementary stage. The method of making pottery during the eighth century continued to be much the same as that previously used for making it, we get a vivid picture of this art from the prophet Jeremiah, who went down to the house of the potter and found him "making a work on the wheels".⁴¹ Great emphasis was placed on form in making vessels and great care was taken in ornamenting them. Of the articles uncovered assigned to this period the most characteristic design consists, as a rule, merely of rings around the vessel, though sometimes carelessly made zig-zags are found. Bird ornamentation which was used so freely in the preceding century almost completely disappears.

⁴⁰ Wallis, Sociological Study of the Bible, p. 58
⁴¹ Jeremiah 18:1-4; Cf. Is. 29:16

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⁴⁰ Elliot, *Archaeological Study of the Bible*, p. 58
⁴¹ Jeremiah 18:1-6

Another commonly practiced occupation was that of weaving, the Hebrews being among the first to take to this. This work was usually done by the women. The method used in this art has probably been given to us accurately by Mackie⁴²

"A bunch of goat hair was taken under the arm, a portion of this was drawn out and tied to a stone, this was spun round and gradually more hair was added to it. A roughly uniform hair would consequently be made." This is the material which is spoken of as sackcloth, and which was worn as a mark of grief. It was also used making tents. During the eighth century the Hebrews learned the art of making a finer cloth in the same way from camel hair.⁴³

Because of the great amount of building that was done, it early became necessary to have a large number of carpenters and masons at hand, and by the eighth century this number had grown to a large proportion. The Harvard excavators who have uncovered many buildings and walls at Samaria give us the following picture as representing the way a wall was built. "The stones were brought to the work just as they were split off in the quarry, of a rough rectangular shape and all fitting was done as they were being built into the wall. The position of the corners having been fixed and the line of the wall marked out, a trench, the width of the pro-

⁴² Mackie, Bible Manners and Customs p. 50

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⁴² Macleod, Bible Manners and Customs, p. 50.
⁴³ Macleod, Bible Manners and Customs, p. 51.

posed wall was cut to receive the lowest course. The work progressed from both corners of the wall toward the middle. When the first stone had been placed in position, a narrow margin on the face toward the next stone was dressed off, and a red line drawn on it vertically as a guide in cutting the edge. One edge of the next stone was then fitted against it, and so on throughout the length of the wall."⁴⁴ This description is useful in that it shows us plainly the extent to which this particular trade had developed.

A small number of the Hebrew men earned their living by making papyrus boats. The leaves of the papyrus or the palm were placed as a floor upon rafts made of earthen jars, which were tied together by the handles, a very crude boat resulted, but in these days they were frequently used for short trips on shallow water. Other boats were made of skins covered with a flooring of leaves and branches. These vessels were called kelleks and were of various sizes from the small boat resting on three or four skins to the great raft, forty feet or more in length and of proportionate width. As these two types of boats offered employment to the few who made them, they were a great benefit to other trades or industries, the whole of the fishing business being dependent on them.

A group of more skilled workers were entrusted with building cisterns to supply the cities with water, which men, excluding the unskilled helpers, would naturally be classed

⁴⁴ Reisner, Harvard Excavations at Samaria p. 105

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A group of more skilled workers were entrusted with building elevators to supply the cities with water, which men, excluding the unskilled helpers, would naturally be classed

as professional architects. The usual custom was to excavate these cisterns in solid rock, or if this was not available, they might be only simple pits in the earth over the bottom of which some form of cement had been spread. In any event a great deal of mathematics would be involved in constructing such a place. This group of workers was also responsible for providing the cities with sanitary systems. Palestine in the eighth century suffered as many of the eastern cities in more backward regions do today, because of ignorance of the laws of sanitation. Wherever they employed any sewer system, it was of the crudest type, usually it was composed of a series of jars with the bottoms broken out, each jar fitting into the mouth of the jar next to it. In this way an improvised pipe was formed which extended a short distance from the dwelling. Formal drains did not make their appearance until the Maccabaeon period.

In general it is assumed that the form of business carried on in most instances was that of the single proprietor. The potter, the baker and the smith usually worked alone, each depending solely on his own earnings. The merchant class had almost complete control of the wealth, but each fortune developed independently.

As has frequently happened in other lands and at times, the successful merchants were driven by a great ambition to acquire landed estates, in order to satisfy their desire they

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proceeded to get the poor into their power. The most common method of doing this was by lending them money, and forcing them to give up their belongings should they fail to be able to pay their debt when the day came, along with losing his property the peasant also lost his freedom. In this way the peasant proprietors who were the backbone of the economic system of the nation were being rapidly expropriated. Those who were deprived of their homes but at the same time were able to keep their freedom either drifted into the towns where they soon sank into conditions of helpless poverty or later were forced into serfdom, with small hope that the merciful provision of the Mosaic law for their release at the end of seven years would ever be acted upon.⁴⁵ The loss of the home meant the ruin of the family, women were oppressed and children robbed of their heritage.⁴⁶

Aside from those unfortunate serfs who lost their freedom because they were unable to pay their debts, there were also those who were taken captive in war, and the serfs who were born in the household of slave women. Oddly enough many of the slaves who could have been given their freedom at the end of six years desired to remain with their masters, they thus were transferred to the class of the permanent slave.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Mic 2:1-2

⁴⁶ Mic. 2:9-8; cf. Mic. 3:10

⁴⁷ Robinson, History of Israel, p. 321

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Such conditions as these were seldom questioned; even the kings of Israel seldom possessed the resources necessary to make any decisions effective against the system. It is true that the kings came from the most influential families and were masters in their own city, either Jerusalem or Samaria but their authority did not extend far beyond these walls. It was not the old tribal organization which demanded his attention, for the secondary tribes had almost entirely given up their claim to political independence. The division of the country into provinces, a consequence of the establishment of financial districts by Solomon had broken them up and they gradually gave way before the two houses of Ephraim and Judah. However, the great landed proprietors especially those who held royal fiefs enjoyed almost unlimited power within their own domain.

We are not to assume from what has been said that all labor in Israel was slave labor, for this is far from being true. There was a large class of day-laborers who were engaged in gardening, ditching, repairing walls, white-washing and portering.⁴⁸ The laborers, mostly men, were employed a little after day break, and their day extended until after sun-down in the evening. They received their pay at the end of the day.⁴⁹ There was also another class of laborer who was

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paid by the week for his services just as people are today, or perhaps the period between payments was even longer.⁵⁰

Sulzberger lists twenty-four occupations followed by people of this class, and it is quite possible that there were many more.⁵¹

F. Commerce and Exchange.

Only one other period in the history of the Hebrew kingdoms compared in commercial activity, with the eighth century, and that was the period during which Solomon reigned. Commerce at this time was of two kinds. There was the traffic in useful and necessary articles produced by craftsmen in the neighborhood, these articles being pottery, food-stuff and the like and trade with foreigners, apart from commodities brought by caravans from distant countries. This was secured by the assignment to Israelite merchants of certain quarters in foreign cities. These merchants seem to have been strictly in the king's service. The Hebrews found that they were capable of growing practically everything they needed themselves, such as corn, wine, oil, flax, and wool. They also found that it was not very profitable to load caravans to send to other distant lands, for practically all ancient countries were capable of doing the same. Therefore, even

⁵⁰ Ibid p. 33

⁵¹ Sulzberger, Status of Labor in Ancient Israel, p. 33

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though commerce was at its height for Israel it remained after all a rather insignificant part of the nation's life.

The Hebrew merchants were greatly benefited however by their geographical location. Some of the great trade routes of the world led through Palestine, this gave to the Israelites the only opportunity of securing an income from without their land. Samaria particularly was on the main trade route which connected Asia with Africa, and all the kings learned the secret of keeping markets open to these steady travelers. However, on the seas the nation found themselves greatly handicapped for Palestine has no natural harbor. There is not a part of that coast today at which anything but a small boat can land. After subduing the Edomites David acquired possession of their port Ezion-Geber,⁵² thus opening the trade of the Red Sea to Israel. In addition to this, through his various alliances with the Phoenicians, he was able to corner the Mediterranean trade, but during the trouble which finally developed into the division of the Hebrew monarchy, it seems that all of this was closed to the two kingdoms; at least the greater portion.

With such great emphasis placed on currency in our day, it is extremely difficult for us to see how the Hebrews were able to make any large transactions at all. There was no

52. II Samuel 8:14.

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With such great emphasis placed on currency in our day, it is extremely difficult for us to see how the Hebrews were able to make any large transactions at all. There was no

regular currency; money such as it was took the form of silver bullion and had to be weighed out whenever payments were made. No record of any coined money is found until the seventh century. In western Asia and Egypt in the period from 1500 to 1300 B. C. gold and silver were prepared for commercial use by being formed into rings, these rings were of no standard weight. They were probably small so that the weight could, at the will of the merchant, be increased by very slight movements. This type of commercial ring can be traced in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria, 884-860 B. C. We find frequent reference in the Bible to a shekel of silver. It is believed that this means one fourth of an ounce of silver bullion. A talent of gold or silver or sixty pounds represented an enormous fortune. A man was considered independent who was worth a talent.

We are not quite sure of what the two words talent and shekel mean when used in other connections than with the silver bullion, and yet we find these words frequently used in references to other weights. Inscribed weights have been found in Palestine and five are known that are inscribed in old Hebrew characters with the word "Neseph" which means half, it is therefore believed that these weights are half shekels.⁵⁴ Another weight found at Samaria bears the inscription "Raba

⁵⁴Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 64

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Neseph", the quarter of a half, and weighs 39.2 grains. Mr. Herbert Clark of Jerusalem owns a weight which is made in the form of a turtle and has written on it, "homesh", a fifth this weighs 38.5 of grains, and was probably intended to be, and used as a fifth of a shekel.⁵⁵ Ordinarily it is believed that the shekel weighed three hundred eleven grains. The study of weights based on the samples that have been found, makes it quite evident that the standards of the Hebrews were not exact. The shekel must have varied from two hundred to more than three hundred grains at times. With this in mind we understand why it was necessary for the prophets to preach so continuously for fairness on the part of the merchants when dealing with their customs.⁵⁶

The dry measures used by the Hebrews were: the homer, which contained ten ephahs, and the ephahs, which contained three seabs.⁵⁷ Corresponding to these were the units of liquid measure (1) the homer which contained ten baths (2) the bath which according to Josephus and Jerome, contained six hins (3) the hin which contained three cabs or twelve logs. The homer is the major unit of each of these two systems, and had the same capacity in each, the ephah of the dry measure equalled the bath of the liquid measure, the

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Mic. 6:11, Ezekiel 45:9-10; Amos 8:5

⁵⁷ Isaiah 40:12

Joseph", the quarter of a half, and weighs 38.3 grains. Mr. Herbert Clark of Jerusalem owns a weight which is made in the form of a turtle and has written on it, "homem", a fifth, this weighs 38.5 of grains, and was probably intended to be, and used as a fifth of a shekel.⁵⁵ Ordinarily it is believed that the shekel weighed three hundred eleven grains. The study of weights based on the samples that have been found, makes it quite evident that the standards of the Hebrews were not exact. The shekel must have varied from two hundred to more than three hundred grains at times. With this in mind we understand why it was necessary for the prophets to preach so continuously for fairness on the part of the merchants when dealing with their customs.⁵⁶

The dry measures used by the Hebrews were: the homer, which contained ten ephahs, and the ephah, which contained three ephahs.⁵⁷ Corresponding to these were the units of liquid measure (1) the homer which contained ten ephahs (2) the bath which according to Josephus and Jerome, contained six nine (3) the hin which contained three ephahs or twelve logs. The homer is the major unit of each of these two systems, and had the same capacity in each, the ephah of the dry measure equalled the bath of the liquid measure, the

cab was the same in each. There is by no means agreement between scholars as to what these weights mean or are equal to. If the capacity of one of the units could definitely be determined we should know the capacity of all the others. Since we do not, all that can be done is a bit of speculation and three common systems of calculating the amount of each measure are used.⁵⁸ One is based on the supposition that the log equals nine tenths of a pint; another that the log equals ninety-one one hundredths of a pint; the third that the log equals one pint. The estimates of the homer vary accordingly, from eighty gallons to eighty-one and twenty-five hundredths gallons to eighty-nine and twenty-eight hundredths gallons.

A great deal of light is thought to be thrown on this matter by four vessels found on the ground of their monastery by the Augustinians of the Assumption, it is believed that these represent a series of measures.⁵⁹ Taking the larger one as the unit, the capacity of the next smaller one is three fourths of the capacity of the first, the third one half the first and the fourth one fourth of it. Some believe that the largest of these vessels represents the ephah of dry measure and the bath of liquid measure. On this basis it is estimated that the Hebrew dry measures were as follows:

Homer = one hundred ninety-six quarts or six bushels and one half peck.

⁵⁸Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 158

⁵⁹Ibid

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Homer = one hundred ninety-six quarts or six bushels and one half peck.

Ephah = nineteen and six tenths quarts or two pecks, three and six tenths quarts
 Seab = six and five hundred and ninety-three thousandths plus quarts
 Omer = One and ninety-six hundredths quarts
 Cab = One and eighty hundred eighty-eight thousandths plus quarts.⁶⁰

As land contracts grew in importance it became necessary to have some definite system of measuring land. It is not known with certainty but it is believed that the Hebrews used the Sumerian system for this. If this is true the standard area for land was the amount of territory that a pair of oxen could plow in a day. Another method for measuring land was in accordance with the size of territory that could be sown with a certain pot of grain. One hundred eighty grains of wheat or barley were put into a vessel called a gin. Sixty gin or ten thousand eight hundred grains were taken as the standard for measuring grains, about four pints or a half peck. This was then sown upon the land and by long observation conclusions were drawn. The standard finally reached was that this amount was one sixteenth of a modern acre.⁶¹

For measuring smaller distances the system was probably this: the basic was the width of the knuckles at the junction of the fingers and the hand, for the next measure it was the distance from the end of the nose to the tips of the fingers and this they called a U, probably equal to one yard. By

⁶⁰ Ibid p. 159

⁶¹ Langdon, Babylonia and Palestine p. 80

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continued observation they found that sixty finger-breadths usually made the distance between the tip of the fingers and the nose, sixty fingers were therefore called a U or a yard. One needs do little thinking to realize that this practice of taking parts of the human body as a standard would encourage much difference of opinion, each person being his own unit of measurement.

The method of making exchanges between persons was therefore of the very simplest nature in every respect and yet credit must go to the Hebrews of this time for laying the foundation for what has proven the greatest contribution of the race to mankind.

G. Taxation

During the latter part of the eighth century the Assyrian empire again began to make itself felt, one of its first steps was to send a large army into Palestine. This army proved successful over the natives and the immediate result was that a heavy tax of one thousand talents was laid upon the kingdom. This great amount was divided among the land-holding population at fifty shekels per head.⁶² If this number can be taken as being accurate it indicates a total of about sixty thousand proprietors.⁶³ This proved a great

⁶² Wallis, God and the Social Process
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handicap to the Hebrews, particularly the poorer ones who were already in debt, and were forced to borrow even greater sums. The Hebrews willingly paid this tribute but hoped that it would mean that the Assyrians would leave them to themselves afterwards, but instead a regular annual tax was imposed, which finally resulted in the fall of Samaria, for the city was attacked when the Israelites were unable to pay this tax, however, because of its strong walls it resisted invasion for three years.

Such taxation as the above was faced by the Israelites only in abnormal times. ^{Par} However, presents more or less compulsory were given to the king by the subjects from the earliest days of the united monarchy.⁶⁴ Apparently the king had the right to the first cut of the pasture land,⁶⁵ and he was free to dispose of this in any way that he so desired. Even as late as the eighth century there seems to be nothing known as a land tax, yet it is quite probable that some kind of property tax existed. It may have been one tenth of all that a given strip of land produced. As far as we know Solomon was the first to put a tax on caravans that passed through his territory, but it proved such a resourceful means of income that all of the kings who followed in both of the kingdoms kept this practice up. In the event a person was con-

⁶⁴ I Sam. 10:27; 16:20

⁶⁵ Amos 7:1

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demned to death for some crime and owned property, this property was lost by his heirs and became a part of the assets of the government.⁶⁶ In time this provided quite a bit of revenue for the king. Even if he had no desire to keep the land he could sell it and keep the money for his own use.

In all of these ways the kings of Israel received their revenue, and they served to provide sufficient sums to keep the country from economic chaos under normal conditions. It was only when a king allowed his lust for show to take him beyond the means of the country; or perhaps when the rainy season failed to provide water enough for the planted fields that Israel really suffered.

H. Duties of the king.

The king's greatest responsibility was felt during the time of war. Throughout all of Israel's history the principal function of the king was to direct warlike operations, and to see that the land was well defended by fortresses and possessed the material for war.⁶⁷ The nucleus of the standing army was always maintained, as well as the body-guard in later centuries. However, the king was responsible for calling out the whole fighting force of the nation whenever this was necessary for the protection of the empire.

⁶⁶ II Kings 8:3,6

⁶⁷ II Chron. 17:2; 26:9-15; 32:2-5

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⁸⁶ II Kings 8:3-8
⁸⁷ II Chron. 17:3; 28:3-15; 33:3-5

Another important phase of the work of the king was in administering justice. In Eastern lands more so than in Western the supreme court of appeal is the sovereign in person. Even the humblest person had the right to personally appeal to the monarch when some charge was brought against him.⁶⁸ In some instances the king was even called the judge.⁶⁹ As time passed the concentration of the judicial function around the court had the effect of diminishing the powers of the elders, though these continued to meet at the city gate and hand down decisions which were accepted as valid. However, this system did not prove altogether beneficial. The royal judges who were developed seemed to be more susceptible to bribery than even the elders were, so that decisions frequently went to the person who was willing to pay most for them.

The king was also looked upon as a guide in religious matters for the people. In any case for a king to neglect the worship of the national god had the effect of alienating a large portion of his subjects who believed themselves to have sprung from their god, and felt that his honor was their own. It was therefore necessary for the king to maintain some form of acceptable religious establishment.

⁶⁸ II Kings 15:1-5
⁶⁹ Amos 2:3

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I. Hebrew dress

The dress of the Palestinians was copied from that of their neighbors, especially the more advanced people of Syria. The men wore over their tunics a fringed kaftan with short sleeves, open in front and of a straight cut, void of the effeminate cuts of a similar garment worn by women. The hat was in a simple crown shape, and their sandals or shoes were of a soft leather.⁷⁰ It was customary to wear long beards and hair, and usually the men curled their beards, probably in accordance with their age. The women apparently adopted all of the latest refinements in vogue in the harems of Damascus, Tyre or Nineveh. The prophet Isaiah gives us what is probably the most accurate account of their dress,⁷¹ including their jewels, trinkets and other articles of adornment. On the basis of a few fragments that have been found it is believed that the woman of the eighth century used the following articles to prepare herself for public appearance: (1) combs - some have been found curved and others that are not curved, some ornamented while others are not, all of these, however, are made of bone or ivory, (2) perfume boxes, (3) spatulae for eye paint, (4) fibulae - a rude kind of safety pin, (5) beads, (6) necklaces - which were also called

⁷⁰ Maspero, Passing of the Empires, p. 127

⁷¹ Isaiah 3:16-24

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chains (Isaiah 3:19), (7) bracelets and armlets - these were made of bronze, iron, ivory, glass, silver and gold, (8) anklets, (9) rings - most of which were simple circles of metal, usually of bronze and sometimes of iron. Silver and gold rings were comparatively few in number and of small size,⁷²

The women of wealth took great pains in painting their eyes, the material used being kohl. This substance is produced by burning a lebon, a kind of frankincense, and also by burning the shells of almonds, either of which could have been secured in the eighth century.⁷³ Kohl greatly darkens the eyebrows, and the arch can be greatly elongated. We find a reference to this practice in Jeremiah (4:30). Because it is an astringent it contracts the eyelids and by contrast of color makes the white of the eye look larger.

72. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 156

73. Bible Customs, p. 175

1. Amos 4:5; 5:13; 7:13; 8:14.

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72. Barton, Archaeology and the Bible, p. 122

73. Bible Customs, p. 173

CHAPTER V

EFFECTS OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY B. C.

The prosperity of Israel in the eighth century affected the life of the nation in many ways. This study has brought clearly to my mind the fact that the reactions of a nation to any experience are the same as those of the individual to the same experience. The tendency of an individual who suddenly comes into wealth is to go far beyond his means. The same was true with the Hebrews, as it was with the Americans in the period from 1925 to 1928.

Fortunately for us, we are able to get a clear picture of the moral life which resulted from Israel's prosperity from the prophets Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah. The information that they give us compares favorably with that given by all of similar significance and reliability, who have lived in any economic or political condition the same as that of Israel at this particular time. Above all the old religiousness of Israel was well-nigh gone. The ox worship of Bethel and Dan had been gradually developed into a gross idolatry; Samaria and Gilgal had raised calf images of their own, for local worship.¹ The great temple at Bethel, at which the king worshipped and near which he had a palace,

¹. Amos 4:5; 5:5; 7:13; 8:14.

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¹ Amos 4:6; 5:8; 7:13; 8:14.

boasted of a high priest, with a numerous staff, richly endowed; not poor, like the priests of Judea. The whole country was filled with altars,² abused by superstition. As time went on even the darker idolatries of Phoenicia, which Jehu, the founder of the dynasty, had so fiercely put down, rose again everywhere. A temple which was built in his day to Abezah was re-opened. The women once more burned incense before her, as their favorite goddess, and decked themselves with ear-rings and jewels on her feast days. Silver and gold images of Baal were set up. The smoke of sacrifices to idols rose on the tops of the mountains and incense was burned to them on the hills, under the shade of sacred groves. The obscenities of heathenism once more polluted the land. Maidens and matrons consorted with temple harlots, and played the wanton in the name of religion.³

The country was, in fact, spoiled by prosperity, which no healthy public morality any longer controlled or directed. Society from the highest to the lowest had become corrupt. Drunkenness and debauchery spread. The birthday festival of the king saw the most revolting excesses.⁴ "The drunkards of Ephraim" became a phrase even in Jerusalem⁵. "The priest and the prophet" reeled with strong drink at their ministrations.⁶ The judges of the courts and the military officers

² Amos 2:8

³ Hosea 4:13-15

⁴ Hosea 7:5

⁵ Isaiah 28:7

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2 Amos 2:3
3 Hosea 4:13-15
4 Hosea 7:5
5 Isaiah 28:7
6 Isaiah 28:7

were equally guilty of this evil. Guests at feasts drank until the scene was repulsive⁷, - the women as well as men. Such sensuality and profuseness led to all other vices. The passion for money became general. Corrupt judges, for a bribe, handed out honest men to slavery for default in payment of a claim. Instead of restoring to the poor, in the evening, as the law required, the upper garment they had taken in pledge, men spread it, as their own, over the couch on which they lay down to nightly carousals held in the house of their gods, where they feasted on the flesh of their sacrifices.

Tumults from such oppression, filled the streets of Samaria. The mansions of the great were stored with the plunder of their poorer neighbors. Their owners lay, garlanded and anointed on couches of ivory. Their banquet were splended. Rich music filled their halls as they feasted. Nor would the wine tempered with water, the drink of their fathers, content them. They drew it from the huge vessels in which their predecessors had mingled their modest refreshment.⁸ The husbandman had to make them oppressive gifts of his wheat. The great landowners used false measures and false weights in selling their corn, and claimed full price

⁷ Isaiah 28:6-7

⁸ Amos 6:4-6

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for even the refuse grain. Men were often forced to pledge their clothes and their freedom for food.

While Jeroboam lived, his strong hand may have checked this breakdown in morals but at his death society was well nigh dissolved. A few were immensely rich, but the mass of the people were in dread of slavery for the cost of an existence which had become a burden. Any revolution or disturbance that promised to change matters was sure of support. To make things worse, the monarchy, rejecting all control by the prophets, threw off the last check to its lawlessness, and was ready to maintain itself by any violence however extreme. Israel had sunk into a mere military despotism in which might was right. Before the fall of the kingdom no fewer than three kings reigned in a single month.⁹

It was during this period, probably more than at any other time in the nation's history, that the population of Israel was greatly divided. Bitter class hatreds arose. Previously the real strength of the nation centered around the small peasant farmers who owned their farms. But with the rise of the system of absentee landlords, these small landowners were done away with. Those who refused to remain on the land they once owned, as servants to the new owners, drifted into the cities where they seldom were able to advance higher than the position of a day-laborer.

⁹ 2 Kings 15:10-14.

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If such conditions had been allowed to continue, it seems certain that the different economic factions in the country would have destroyed its government entirely by civil war, but, as sometimes happens, the needs of the time produce men capable, at least, of relieving the tension, if not of entirely correcting the evils. Just as undesirable conditions in Russia caused Lenin and his co-workers to come to the front, so equally undesirable conditions in Israel caused Hosea, Micah, Isaiah to come to the front, and Amos before them, from Judah to Israel, to condemn the prevailing practices which were certain to bring destruction to all the people. The student of the social history of the eighth century must always realize that the prophets were a product of the social situation, and that the great center of their teachings is that Israel had deserted the requirements of Jehovah, which were justice, mercy, righteousness, faith and love, and was therefore, doomed to destruction.¹⁰

"The step forward which Amos, Hosea, Isaiah Micah took denotes one of the most momentous changes in the history of mankind. The all subduing force of conscience, or more exactly, of the conscience of a single individual to the opposition of the whole surrounding world, came into action and made itself felt for the first time. The consequences of the struggle fought out in the eighth and seventh centuries, within the small area of Palestine are still felt throughout the whole range of our civilization".¹¹

¹⁰ Amos 5:24; Hosea 6:6; Isaiah 1:4; Micah 6:8

¹¹ Meyer, Kleine Schriften

If such conditions had been allowed to continue, it seems certain that the different economic factions in the country would have destroyed its government entirely by civil war, but, as sometimes happens, the needs of the time produce men capable, at least, of relieving the tension, if not of entirely correcting the evils. Just as undesirable conditions in Russia caused Lenin and his co-workers to come to the front, so equally undesirable conditions in Israel caused Hosea, Micah, Isaiah to come to the front, and Amos before them, from Judah to Israel, to condemn the prevailing practices which were certain to bring destruction to all the people. The student of the social history of the eighth century must always realize that the prophets were a product of the social situation, and that the great center of their teachings is that Israel had deserted the requirements of Jehovah, which were justice, mercy, righteousness, faith and love, and was therefore, doomed to destruction.¹⁰

"The step forward which Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah took denotes one of the most momentous changes in the history of mankind. The all-subduing force of conscience, or more exactly, of the conscience of a single individual to the position of the whole surrounding world, came into action and made itself felt for the first time. The consequences of the struggle fought out in the eighth and seventh centuries, within the small area of Palestine are still felt throughout the whole range of our civilization."¹¹

¹⁰ Amos 5:24; Hosea 6:6; Isaiah 1:4; Micah 6:8

¹¹ Meyer, Kleine Schriften

It is entirely wrong to think all that resulted from the prosperity of the eight century was disastrous. To the contrary there were some results which have had a lasting effect upon the development of civilization. In this connection must be mentioned the great emphasis that was placed on writing. The eighth century prophets were the first to write their messages down. It was probably the success of their efforts that has since led the whole world into the habit of compiling books for future use. No one doubts the good that has been done society through this means.

We also have interest in this period because in it we find the first principles of our present economic system. Before this time no one questioned the right of the king to do all of the trading with foreign countries in his own name. But now instead of allowing this to remain a monarchical monopoly, private citizens began to realize their right to enter in international transactions, and thus there grew up a class of independent merchants, of the type that we have in our own society.

The age offers encouragement to all peoples who are oppressed and want to free themselves from economic bondage, for here we find the first group of liberators, rising up and openly criticizing the government, the people, and national affairs in general, pleading for a purging of politics in the interest of all.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The first account of the Hebrews as anything more than a wandering clan is the record of their sojourn in Egypt. And yet because contemporary records fail to substantiate the Biblical account, some scholars even doubt that the nation was ever in Egypt. The only contemporary allusion to Israelites is found in the recently discovered triumphal stele of Merneptah, son of the great Rameses II, and here it seems that the Hebrews referred to are in Palestine. Granting that the sacred records are accurate, and it is more than likely that they are, for no nation as proud as the Israelites would invent such a humiliating narrative about itself, the people at this time were of the simplest type.

They were subjects of Egypt, living in a sort of slavery with self-government as far as their own clans went, but very low down on the economic scale. The oppression was endured until the great building programs of the nation caused the ruler of Egypt to make even stricter regulations concerning the aliens. Then they found it necessary to leave the country, to attempt to form a national home of their own.

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lated from other nations and forced to support itself on the foods of the wilderness, the milk of their cattle, and on special occasions even on the flesh of these animals. During this period the development economically was rather slow, however, in order to provide clothing and tent coverings it became necessary to learn the art of weaving. Also in order to prepare the meals the men were forced to engage in making required utensils.

The transition from a nomadic life to an agricultural life once the nation reached Canaan, was not sudden but rather a slow process. The Israelites knew little about agriculture and were therefore dependent upon the Canaanites, who were not completely driven from the land, but probably for the most part had been made serfs or had been assimilated into the invading race. As this was true in the agricultural life, it was also true with the commercial activities, and industrial activities as far as such went.

The first realization of prosperity came during the reign of Solomon. This was a brilliant reign in every respect. Great buildings were erected which denoted Israel's condition. The king engaged in many commercial enterprises, and won much fame as a trader and merchant. This was the beginning of financial difficulties for the Hebrews. Solomon allowed his lust for display to carry him too far. Instead of helping his people in the end it was proven that he had great-

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ly handicapped their future development. Strife was the result and soon after his death, violent disturbances took place. The people revolted against Solomon's son and the monarchy was divided, almost in a state of financial collapse.

Starting from a condition that almost equalled that which they knew when first they entered Canaan, the two kingdoms attempted to develop separately, and they were both successful to a remarkable degree. Prosperity came to Israel again during the reign of Ahab, and immediately he resumed the policies of Solomon. Among the outstanding failures of this reign was that realized when Jezebel influenced the people to worship idols. The condition of the masses is probably portrayed too in the incident of Naboth's vineyard. This reign was no different from Solomon's in result, the king went too far in his program of building expansion, the result being in time another extended period of anarchy, even more serious than the former.

The prosperity of Israel in the eighth century like the former greatness of David and Solomon was due not so much to any inherent energy on the part of Israel, as to the weakness of the nations on its frontier. Egypt never intervened in the quarrels of Asia, and Assyria was suffering from over-indulgence in previous conquests. Damascus seemed permanently quieted by its sudden collapse, and Hadrace or Mansuati

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the cities which sought to take its place found themselves fully employed in resisting the spasmodic attacks of the Assyrians. The Hebrews were therefore left alone for a quarter of a century, with complete peace and the opportunity to turn all of its attention toward inner development.

A large percentage of the people continued to be agricultural as well as raisers of cattle.¹ Ordinarily the home life was very simple, though the wealthy class spent much money in making their homes luxurious. Few industries existed in the country other than those of the potter and the smith, and the Hebrews may not have taken a very active part in these. The Hebrew monarchs did their very best to encourage what seemed a growing desire for trade, however, the complicated state of Syrian politics prevented them from following the example of Solomon, and opening communication by sea with the far-famed countries of Ophir.

In general appearance the Hebrew towns closely resembled the ancient Canaanite cities, their architecture seeming predominantly Egyptian. The roads were bad, as carefully constructed roads did not make their appearance in Palestine until the Maccabean period, but because of the geographical location of the capital, Samaria, there was a flourishing land trade with other countries, because caravans going to distant lands were forced to pass through. These caravans

¹ II Kings 8:5

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were compelled to pay a toll and this provided a much needed source of income to supplement the portion of produce required by the government of all who owned land that was being tended. Israel had no coined money but made transactions either by barter or by using silver bullion which was weighed at every purchase. A system of weights and measures existed which would have much greater significance for us if we were able to determine the standard of each.

This was an age which marked great advancement over any preceeding age in the nation's history, but it was not without its effects. Along with the wealth came many evils; idleness and luxury seemed to characterize the rich, while oppression and increased poverty always haunted the poor. The breach between classes became more noticeable, as the middle class was done away with, leaving only the wealthy and the poverty stricken. The morals of the nation were greatly lowered and on every hand the people went from one form of debauchery to another. Religion that had previously meant so much lost its significance as the people turned to idols for comfort, being led at times by a corrupt priesthood. At this epoch when Israel was so much in need of strong leadership, the literary prophets made their appearance, proclaiming themselves interpreters of religion and at the same time spokesmen of the people who desired justice, freedom from cruel exploitation, and the opportunity of developing as all their

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